



BarNotes

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San Fernando Valley Bar Association

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FROM BAR TO BENCH ASSOCIATION PAST-PRESIDENT THOMAS TRENT LEWIS ELEVATED TO FAMILY LAW JUDGESHIP

BY LISA MILLER

1978 was a year of big changes: The United States recognized the Peoples' Republic of China, and South Africa began to dismantle apartheid. And the Valley's newest judge, Thomas Trent Lewis, was sworn in as a member of the California bar.

Lewis, recently of Woodland Hills' Rehwald Rameson Lewis & Glasner, has practiced family law with the firm since its inception in 1978.

"This judgeship is the greatest culmination of a law career I could ever have hoped for," Lewis says. "I am honored to sit in the family law department in the Central District."

Lewis says he aimed for this career transition for many years. Service on the bench was something he had long hoped for.

"This change in careers came with the focused intention of serving the community from the bench to protect children and resolve family conflicts in a dignified, progressive manner, faithful to the principles of fairness and equity," he says.

Lewis, president of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association 1992-93, was a member of the board of the Valley Community Legal Foundation as well.

"I credit much of my learning process to my involvement with the San Fernando Valley Bar Association," he says. "I've learned so much from my colleagues at the bar. It's been invaluable."

Lewis' dedication to the family law field is unparalleled. He was the president of the Society of Certified Family Law Specialists of Southern California in 1985-86. He belonged to and chaired the Family Law Advisory Commission for the California Board of Legal Specialization in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He was a member and delegate of the State Bar Family Law Section Committee on Custody and Visitation throughout the 1980s, and continues as a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. And he was part of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association Family Law Section Executive Committee 1984-88.

"Sometimes this work is just heartbreaking," Lewis says. "But most of the time it's the most rewarding area of law anyone could ever practice."

Lewis is truly a son of the San Fernando Valley. He earned his Juris Doctor from the San Fernando Valley College of Law, with honors, in 1979, a year after he was sworn into the bar as a practicing attorney. He was a member of the law review in 1977 and won the student articles editor position in 1978.

"Editing all that research was a broadening experience," he says. "I learned a lot about communicating complex legal ideas in understandable ways."

But Lewis didn't limit his volunteer hours to just one geographic area. He worked tirelessly for the good of the State Bar as well in his position as a delegate of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association Conference of Delegates to the State Bar from 1985-88. He chaired the Board of Legal Specialization panel for the State of California and earned a family law specialization credential from the bar as well.

"Working with the State Bar's issues gave me another, very broad perspective," Lewis says.

"That experience helped me see many ways to help improve delivery of legal services to consumers on a State-wide basis."

Lewis has always shown a tendency to think big, according to his colleagues. Keri S. Caetano has moved to Lewis' office to take over the practice with Kevin James Mooney. She had her own law firm prior to making the move. She says Lewis constantly impresses her with his grasp of the overriding issues.

"Tom simultaneously sees the tiny details and the larger effects of the facts and issues in his cases," Caetano says. "His grasp of the ramifications of even the smallest facts is instantaneous"

Lewis has applied this tree-top view to his leadership of the Association's Family Law section, where Caetano has been a member for many years. She has recently taken over as the Section Chair.

"I hope to continue the incredibly popular programming that Tom has implemented in the areas of ending a marriage or domestic partnership;

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A Remembrance of Things Past

RICHARD A. LEWIS, SFVBA PRESIDENT



May is an eclectic month. Many significant events in our nation's history have taken place in May. We celebrate important ideas and institutions and honor those who fought and died to protect the values we hold dear. And it is the month in which we commemorate painful events in our past.

On May 1, the nation officially celebrates the rule of law. In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower designated that day as Law Day USA. He urged the people of the United States to "observe the designated day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

President Eisenhower especially urged the legal profession, the press, and the entertainment industry to promote and participate in Law Day observances. Charles S. Rhyne, who originated Law Day, explained that the celebration honors the timeless notion that the law should be used to achieve individual and social justice, as well as contrast democracy with communism.

Two of the most significant events highlighting the role of the courts and the law in the struggle for individual and social justice took place in May. On May 18, 1896, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that separate but equal facilities do not violate the Constitution.

Then, on May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court unanimously overruled *Plessy v. Ferguson* in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Court held that segregated facilities violated the 13th and 14th amendments to the United States Constitution. The Court adopted the position of Justice John Marshall Harlan, who dissented in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

In that famous dissent, Justice Marshall eloquently stated what we now accept as the fundamental principal underlying our system of law, that:

[I]n respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.

The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved.

When we celebrate Law Day, we acknowledge and affirm this fundamental principal as the linchpin of our society.

The other significant institution we celebrate in May is Mother's Day. This celebration can be traced back to the spring festival of ancient Greece honoring Rhea, the Mother of the Gods. On May 9, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May as Mother's Day. This was the culmination of a campaign first begun in 1872 by Julia Ward Howe (who wrote the words to the song Battle Hymn of the Republic). She proposed to celebrate Mother's Day as a day dedicated to peace. Ana Jarvis continued this campaign in 1907, leading to a national Mother's Day.

In addition to celebrating important ideas and institutions in May, we also honor those who have served our nation and who have fought and died for the ideas and values we treasure.

On May 20, we celebrate Armed Forces Day, which was first proclaimed by President Harry Truman on May 20, 1950. On this day we honor the men and women who have served in uniform in all the branches of our Armed Forces, in both war and peace, since the nation's founding.

On May 30, Memorial Day, we honor and give thanks to those who have died in all American wars. Originally, this celebration was known as Decoration Day. John A. Logan, Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued General Order No. 11, directing that "the 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land." In 1967 the name was changed to Memorial Day, to honor all soldiers who have died in war.

It seems somewhat odd that we celebrate Law Day and its emphasis on the rule of law in the same month that we celebrate our armed forces and those who have fought and died in past wars. Law, by its very nature, seeks to resolve dispute through peaceful means. When we must resort to violence to resolve our differences, we characterize it as a "lawless" act.

However, it is perhaps fitting and proper that we honor the men and women who have served in our armed forces and who have

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MICHELE C. MORLEY, ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Who among us has not waited impatiently as our computers boot up? Even DSL doesn't get us online fast enough. I sit at my desk and my heart pounds with impatience (we're all reading too many blogs and not enough poetry). But until the world slows again, instant results and fast service is what clients expect and require. And the LRIS referral staff is expected to be the quick-response team when the public calls.

To accomplish this, the team needs the cooperation of panel attorneys and their staffs. When an attorney receives a call from referral staff members Gayle, Rosie or Alberto, the panel attorney should try to take that call immediately. If impossible, the panel attorney should designate a staff member to schedule those appointments.

Panel attorneys should be sure that receptionists and secretaries know that the LRIS calls are important, and they need to inform the attorney as soon as possible. When a law office promises to call back in five minutes, try to keep that promise.

The LRIS is waiting to hear from the attorney, and the potential client is expecting to hear from the LRIS that it will provide a referral. In this zoom-zoom world, if one referral service does not provide immediate service, the caller will move on to a referral service that does. And the attorney may not be a member of that service.

On a more philosophical note, I recently attended an SFVBA committee meeting with attorneys working a joint project with the

LRIS. I was struck by how attentive the committee members were to issues that might affect the SFVBA staff or membership. They had our best interests as a priority consideration. "These are really good people," I thought to myself.

I interviewed a 10-year attorney now joining the LRIS, Robert Starr. He joined the Modest Means panels, even though he has a large staff and overhead. He talked about how important it is for him to practice law as a profession, with social responsibilities to fulfill.

"I'm very serious in my desire to help people in our community," Starr said. "I believe that much of my success has been the result of my sincere desire to help people."

All the attorneys I've interviewed for the LRIS have volunteered their philosophies on the practice of law. Recently, Seymour Amster, Angela Berry-Jacoby, Jonathan Evans, Sean Ethington, Jason Halpern, Michele Haver, Stephen Holzer, Morris Getzels, Paul Giannini, Mark Massey, Lawrence Rosenberg, Steven Sopera, and Sergei Shevchenko have joined the LRIS. Each talked about the public service aspects to their practices and their intentions to ensure that the law is about justice, not "just us."

We all hear comments about greedy lawyers. We're frequently ridiculed. But these are not the attorneys I know through the SFVBA/LRIS. The attorneys I know are dedicated professionals doing great work for their clients and for the image of the profession overall. 🐘

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Coach's Corner

A Series of Practical Tips on Running a Profitable Law Firm

BY EDWARD POLL



Hard Eight

How to Stack the Odds in the Fee-Payment Gamble

Even when counsel includes detailed payment terms in the client engagement letter, collecting payment can still be a roll of the dice. Advocates should never lose sight of the fact that a lawyer's inventory is not billable hours; it's the cash those hours represent.

While some critics may feel that emphasizing receivables is unprofessional, the alternative could be receiving nothing for all counsel's hard work. And the answer to uncollected receivables is not generating new work to cover bad debts.

Depending on the practice, counsel may have to wait up to 18 months from first client contact to first professional assignment. Add the typical 120-day average billing cycle for new work and a new client may not produce a first payment for up to two years.

The better course for any lawyer is to make sure clients know they must pay their bills on time. That means counsel must take a businesslike approach to collecting money.

Here are eight useful steps to follow, from the start of an engagement to unpleasant, but sometimes necessary, last resorts:

1. **Get it in writing.** Counsel will have a much easier experience trying to collect a fee if the need for payment is specified in the engagement letter. Clients must understand their obligations.
2. **Make a plan.** For every single matter, counsel should prepare a budget that addresses events, time and money, and get the client to sign off on it. This document significantly increases counsel's chances of collecting the fee because the client understands what to expect.
3. **Keep accurate time records.** Studies have shown that lawyers who do not record and bill their time throughout the day lose a minimum of 10 percent to 15 percent of the firm's overall revenue through incomplete billing. In order for counsel to bill, counsel must first document the work.
4. **Minimize ancillary expenses.** Although counsel's client agreement permits charges for opening a file on each matter or for photocopying a file before giving it to a client, clients may resent perceived "nickel and diming" on charges they consider overhead, giving them an excuse (in their minds) not to pay their bills.
5. **Communicate constantly.** Counsel should stay in constant touch with the client about expenses vs. budget. If advocates suspect that a slowdown in payments is a result of client dissatisfaction, counsel needs to find out why the client is unhappy.

6. **Don't personally ask for the money.** If payment hasn't arrived, counsel should task a staff member who's good with people and sensitive to their needs to make the call. Advocates should remain separate from the collections function.

7. **Consider a collection service.** Before embarking on this path, counsel should first review the client file to make sure it contains no evidence of professional negligence. Advocates can avoid jeopardizing confidentiality by only disclosing details that are absolutely necessary for the collections agency to do its job.

8. **Know when to fold 'em.** Ultimately, a non-payment situation may come down to one of two options: Either working out terms with a client who is willing but unable to pay, or walking away from the engagement, a right and obligation if payment appears unlikely.

With any law firm, only one bottom line matters – preventing and solving collection problems. ↗

Edward Poll is a nationally recognized coach and consultant to lawyers and law firms. He can be reached at www.lawbiz.com or (800) 837-5880.



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President's Message, continued from page 3

fought and died for our country in the same month as we celebrate Law Day. Those who fought in our most horrible struggles, the Civil War, World War I and World War II, did so to uphold the principles of liberty and democracy, to ensure, as President Abraham Lincoln said, that "this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," to ensure that ultimately the rule of law prevails both in our nation and our world.

It is also fitting and proper that we celebrate Mother's Day in this month as we honor those who have died in war. Mother's Day was originally conceived as a day dedicated to peace. It is also important because so many mothers have given their sons and daughters to these conflicts, and they now individually mourn their losses.

As I continue to think of the month of May, I am reminded that Yom Ha-Shoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, is officially observed on the 27th of Nissan in the Hebrew calendar. This fell on May 5 of last year and will occur in May again in 2008.

Thinking of the Holocaust, I was reminded of the words of the philosopher and poet George Santayana. Santayana who wrote, in his seminal work, *The Life of Reason*, "Those who cannot remember history are condemned to repeat it."

If that is true, then, of all the things we commemorate, the most important is the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust. It is important that we remember the horrible events of the Holocaust, events which we would like to forget because of their savagery and inhumanity, so that they will never happen again.

As I think of this tragedy and our celebration of Law Day and its emphasis on the rule of law, the problem is not a lack of law. Germany had a system of laws, but lacked principles underlying the law that respected the humanity of all individuals, and well as the lack of a common belief in the dignity of the individual. The genocide in Germany, as well as the genocides in Kosovo, Rwanda, and Darfur, horribly, and graphically illustrate what happens when we cease believing in the inalienable rights of all people, regardless of their racial, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

For this reason, as we celebrate the rule of law, we must also accept and continually affirm the principle stated by Justice Harlan in his dissent in *Plessy v Ferguson*, that all citizens are equal before the law.

In the book *Remembrance of Things Past*, Marcel Proust described our struggle to remember our past by writing,

And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) which we do not suspect. And as for that object, it depends on chance whether we come upon it or not before we ourselves must die.

By setting aside designated times of the month to remember important events, I hope our remembrance of things past does not depend on chance. 🐾

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Theirs and Yours, but Not Ours: Counsel's Role in Mergers and Acquisitions

BY WILLIAM C. STALEY



Attorneys have special roles in the sale or purchase of businesses. For many sellers, this is the biggest transaction in their lives and will determine the quality of their retirement years. Buyers want assurances that the business will perform as the seller has represented.

Ideally, attorneys should be involved before the client shakes hands on a deal -- and definitely before the letter of intent is prepared. The attorneys raise issues that the principals might not have considered. Examples of important issues that counsel can address are:

- Buying assets vs. selling stock
- Income and sales tax issues
- Material items about which the seller cannot give strong representations
- Skeletons in the closet
- Limits on the seller's willingness to indemnify the buyer for failed representations

The attorney also guides the client in balancing the complexity of the transaction against the transaction costs. Examples of this perspective include:

- Payment in cash with strong seller representations and indemnification (low transaction costs) vs. a contingent purchase price or earn-out

- Seller financing and a structured bonus plan for the seller as manager-employee and covenant not to compete (high transaction costs)

Taking the time to prepare a more detailed letter of intent can minimize negotiation time later when the definitive documents are prepared. Generally, the buyer's attorney prepares:

- Letter of intent
- Purchase agreement
- Covenants not to compete
- Employment agreements
- Consulting agreements

The seller's attorney usually prepares:

- Promissory notes
- Security agreements and guarantees (if any)
- Leases or licenses from the seller to the buyer

Sometimes, an attorney insists on preparing documents that the opposing attorney should prepare. This will probably result in more negotiating time and more iterations of the documents to reach an ultimate agreement.

Attorneys who have mergers and acquisitions experience can give clients a sense of the process, the issues to expect the other side to raise and what is reasonable to demand and to

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concede. By giving the client insight into what the other side is thinking, counsel can minimize the risk of the parties digging in their heels over an insignificant point and killing the deal. However, the attorneys always represent their clients, not the deal.

An investment banker can help salvage the deal when the parties and their attorneys have reached an impasse. Often the banker has seen more deals, or more deals in a particular industry, than the attorneys. The investment banker, who is usually paid on closing, really represents the deal.

The banker speaks to both principals and, to the chagrin of the attorneys, often gives the principals a second opinion on their attorneys' advice. The banker can

answer the valuation question that attorneys are often asked, but which they can seldom answer. A banker can protect the seller's board of directors with a fairness opinion.

Many investment bankers specialize in middle market companies. If the purchase price is less than \$2 million, the parties are likely to use a business broker instead of an investment banker, and they are less likely to seek legal advice.

The attorney can assist early in the transaction by recommending that the principals use an investment banker or business broker. This is especially helpful in the following situation: the business owner has not groomed or "shopped" the business, but has been approached by a prospective buyer with an attractive offer.

The owner wants to start the sale process right away. However, that owner might find a much better offer if the owner hired an investment banker to help groom and market the company. The principals will feel better about the transaction and it will proceed more smoothly with an experienced intermediary.

The attorney for the seller should encourage the seller to groom the business for the sale and to prepare for the due diligence process. The attorney can help manage how the seller reveals its trade secrets and identifies its key employees and vendors.

Few attorneys have all of the legal expertise needed for a merger or acquisition transaction. Counsel often needs advice from tax, real estate, environmental, labor, ERISA or other specialized attorneys, as well as environmental consultants. If the seller is involved in litigation, the buyer will probably want a litigation attorney to review each case; the seller's attorney should protect the seller's attorney-client and work product privileges. The parties' accountants are usually deeply involved in the due diligence process.

Parties often fare best when they sign the sale documents and close at the same time. Signing the documents and closing later is necessary only if third party consents or licenses are needed. Often, the buyer pays the purchase price by wire transfer, so at the closing, the parties sign documents but do not exchange them until the seller's bank confirms that the transfer has been completed.

Almost every sale of a business requires many documents. After the closing it is helpful for each attorney's office to prepare a bound or velobound volume with copies of all of the documents and a table of contents. Sometimes it is helpful to include a closing memorandum to indicate the order in which the documents were signed. If the attorney has a digital camera, it is nice to take a photo of everyone at the closing and to include that in the bound volume.

The Business Law Section of the American Bar Association publishes excellent form books for sales of businesses and also guides on the sale process. 🐾

William C. Staley, a tax and business law attorney in Woodland Hills, frequently represents buyers and sellers of business interests. He can be contacted at (818) 936-3490 and bill@staley.com.

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BY LISA MILLER, SMALL FIRM & SOLE PRACTITIONER SECTION CHAIR



Leading by example was the phrase-of-the-day at the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section luncheon on March 8, 2006 at the San Fernando Valley Bar Association headquarters in Woodland Hills. Faith Pincus, of Woodland Hills' Pincus Communications, explained and demonstrated best practices for public speakers to a noticeably appreciative audience.

Pincus is an attorney and founder of Pincus Communications. The firm specializes in public speaking training for attorneys and other presenters. She has been training public speakers for more than two decades.

"Language is power," Pincus said. "And speakers can enhance their effectiveness by always remembering to focus on audience, message, and image."

Pincus, a former law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Wanger, worked as a litigator for Heller Ehrman before launching her current endeavor.

"Counsel should always limit themselves to three main points when making oral presentations," she said. "Advocates must understand the audience's needs and strive to meet them."

Pincus earned a Masters in Communications from California State University in Fresno. She earned her Juris Doctor at the University of Iowa.

"I've seen that many counsel forget the basic structure of introduction, conclusion and using transitions," she said.

Introductions should always contain attention-getting devices of some sort, Pincus said. Speakers should memorize introductions and maintain eye contact.

"Conclusions employ many of the same requirements as introductions," she said. "They should be a wrap-up and short reiteration of the contents of the presentation as well."

Transitions tell the listeners the future, she said. She suggested that speakers use the phrase "moving on."

She also touched on speech delivery foibles of some counsel, including tics and quirks. She recommended that counsel video-tape themselves to become aware of these habits as the first step toward eliminating them.

"Some counsel neglect image as a concern," she said. "Speakers should dress better than the audience is dressed."

She recommended dark suits with color at the neck. She warned against flashy jewelry for both men and women. 🐘

For more information about the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, please contact Lisa Miller at BARNOTES@LMillerconsulting.com.

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From Bar to Bench, continued from page 1

parentage; custody and visitation; child, spousal, and partner support; and adoption," she says. "Under his leadership, we have built up our largest membership number ever."

Kevin James Mooney worked as an associate and later partner in the firm with Lewis for more than 10 years. Mooney sees Lewis' leadership form a very personal perspective.

"Thom has been an integral part of my personal life and career and directly mentored me through undergraduate, graduate and law school and my practice of law, even supporting me to become a member of the executive committee of the family law section of the San Fernando Valley Bar in 2003 and a certified specialist in family law in 2004," Mooney says. "Thom's unwavering moral and ethical approach to this difficult field of law has guided my own path. I have traveled on the coat-tails of one of the true greats."

New Judge Lewis is keeping all of this in perspective, however.

"I still have to play by the same set of rules," he says. "So a lot of things really haven't changed."

The San Fernando Valley Bar Association Board of Trustees will host a reception celebrating the appointment of Judge Lewis on May 4, 2006 at 5:30 p.m. at the Association's offices. 🏠



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I would be inappropriate to use this space as a kind of soap box, which is another way of saying, "that's what I think". But I'm going to play around with it a bit - so don't leave. I just might be on to something.

The lowest common denominator in life is self-interest. Some tell me I'm being too cynical, some say I'm thinking too hard. My critics might say, "Duh - why is it that this is just now hitting you?" What's new for me is the increasing and apparently paradoxical manner that self-interest has begun to show-up.

I have a growing suspicion that true individuality has lately become too perilous for the average Joe. This is all the more remarkable because rugged individualism is one of the philosophical underpinnings of true Americanism.

If we stop thinking for ourselves, what will become of us as a people? We are so identified with individualism as a value. We fought the Cold War to dispute the alleged superiority of group-welfare over *laissez-faire* individualism, as the preferred force for society.

On the other hand, if we were forthcoming about our selfish desires, we would likely be barred from playing with the kids who have chosen to be involved in a group political process as the most efficient means of maximizing individual gratification.

Just when I begin to become truly frightened and almost embarrassed to be thinking out loud about this stuff, a simple Google search reminds me of Irving Janis. Janis was a renowned research psychologist at Yale University, and eventually professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1973, he coined the term "groupthink" to describe when members of a group conform their opinions to what they believe to be the consensus of the group.

Janis was studying the systematic errors groups make when forming collective decisions. What strikes me

as important is the apparent tendency of individuals to bend reality to fit the group's agenda. They fashion the truth to fit the moment.

It is evident that dedicated groups of individuals interpret and act on neutral external stimuli in a manner that best promotes the direction of their group. This interpretation and action is contrary to the way they would interpret that same stimuli if they were alone.

While groupthink is ostensibly for the welfare of the entire group, the paradox is that it actually effectively optimizes the acquisition of purely

continued on page 20

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Report From the Foundation

Valley Community Legal Foundation Accepting Board Applications



ANNE ADAMS, VCLF PRESIDENT

The Valley Community Legal Foundation of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association is the charitable arm of the Association and a community based organization. The Foundation Board includes attorneys, judicial officers, educators, business people, and other members of the community. The organization seeks to include members of the legal community and the general public.

The Foundation is currently accepting nominations to its Board of Directors. The Board raises money for scholarship prizes and grants. The group determines which organizations and individuals receive Foundation assistance.

A Board seat is an ideal position for those who seek to give back to the community. Attorneys who want to make a difference in their local community should consider applying.

Foundation Board members attend several meetings each year and participate on at least one of the Board's committees. Meetings for fiscal year 2005-2006 are held in the evening of the third Wednesday of each month.

All Board members contribute to the Board's fundraising efforts. Members have several avenues through which to contribute to fundraising.

Some Board members solicit donations for the Foundation auction or secure sponsorships. Other Board members make personal donations, or their firms sponsor the Foundation's Law Day Gala, held April 28 at the Woodland Hills Country Club. Sponsorships start at just \$500.

Foundation Board volunteers support the organization's scholarships and grants programs. In 2005, the Foundation gave away \$48,000 in grants and scholarships. Approximately one-half of the funds went to scholarships for students at Monroe High School, Pierce College, California State University, Northridge and the University of West Los Angeles School of Law. The other half supported programs that received law-related grants. ♠

Candidates Wanted!

All Association members should consider applying to the Foundation Board.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume, bio, or curriculum vitae to:

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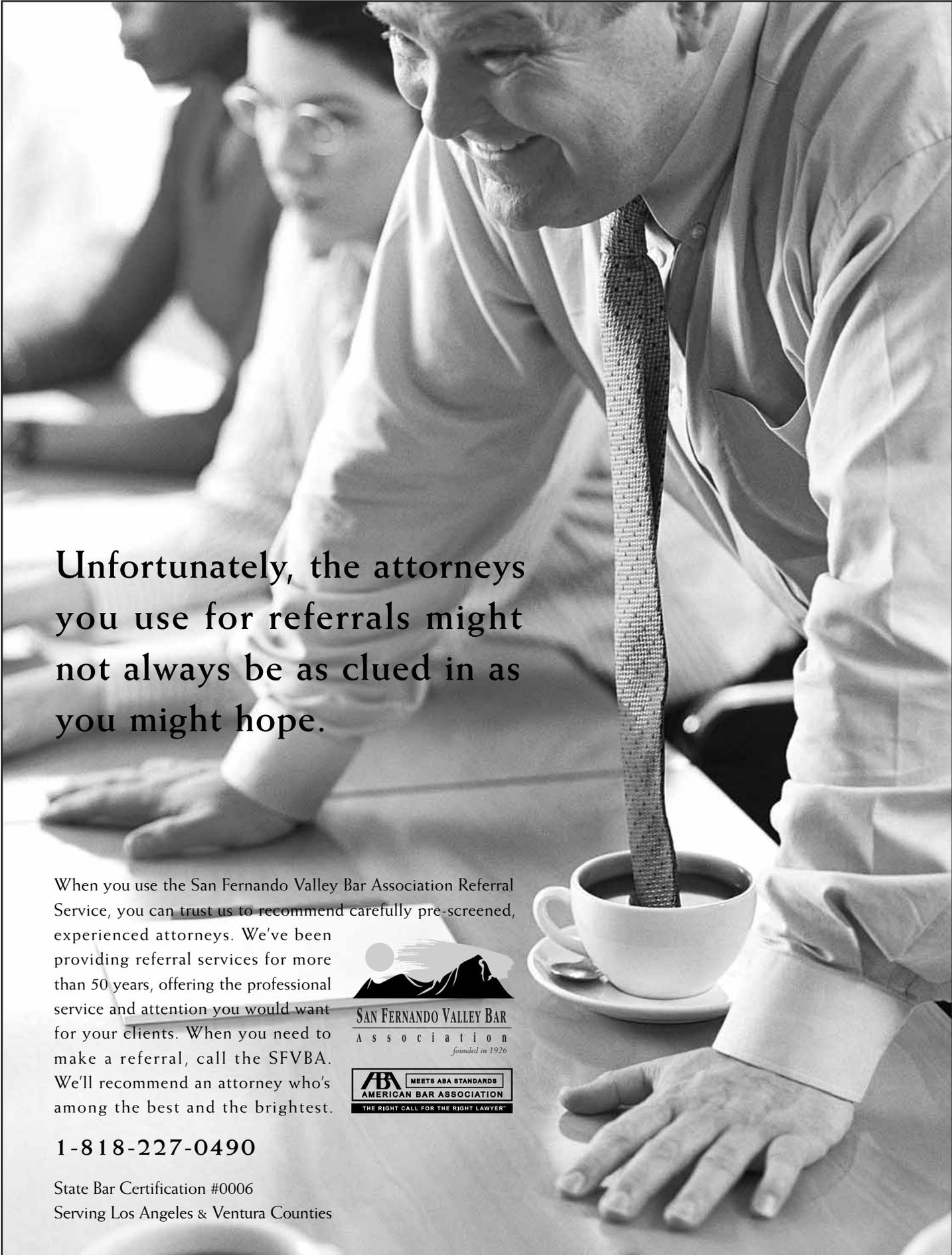
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Nominations Sought for SFVBA Board of Trustees

The San Fernando Valley Bar Association Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for candidates to the SFVBA Board of Trustees.

The eight-member Nominating Committee will meet next month to fill six open seats on the 19-member Board. The Committee also selects the SFVBA Treasurer, Secretary, and President-Elect. The Committee can nominate up to 12 candidates for Trustee and two candidates for each officer position. Current President-Elect Patricia McCabe automatically becomes President on October 1.

Interested Members can download the SFVBA's *Policy Statement Re: Board of Trustees Responsibilities* at <http://www.sfvba.org/about/boardoftrustees.htm>. Letters of Intent and resume can be submitted to SFVBA Nominating Committee, 21300 Oxnard Street, Suite 250, Woodland Hills, CA 91367. All nominations must be received by Friday, May 19.

"We are looking for candidates who are committed to the future of the SFVBA," announces SFVBA President Richard Lewis. "We want leaders who represent the diversity of our membership: sole practitioners, members of large firms, barristers, in-house counsel, public sector attorneys, lawyers from all areas of law and background."

The Committee must issue their report to the Secretary of the Association by June 10. Nomination by the Committee is not the only way for a member's name to be placed on the ballot. Additional nominations for any office (except that of President or President-Elect) or for Trustee may be made by filing a written nomination with the SFVBA Secretary, Sue Benavid-Arbiv, signed by at least twenty active members of the SFVBA, no later than July 25. Ballots are mailed to attorney members in August and Election Day is September 10. 🐾



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Santa Clarita Valley Bar Association, continued from page 13

selfish individual advantage. It's just safer to be part of a group. There's strength in numbers, especially when the threat is the invisible throng of "them," allegedly threatening our way of life and undermining our traditional values.

The real threat to society is the abdication of individual reasoning and heartfelt integrity. Janis and others consider these to be pathological dysfunctions of the group.

While the *Zeitgeist* may be filled with passing whims, the repository of the Rule of Law must never be so. As guardians of the legal system, lawyers must be vigilant and committed to opposing those who would selfishly corrupt the basic foundations of our way of life.

We must not permit our legal system to become just another tool of the most vociferous social-political forces. This includes a constant resistance to impulsive amendments to our State and Federal constitutions, as well as the thoughtless expansions of the meanings and principles inherent in our statutes. It would equally include resistance to the increasing politicization of our judiciary.

Our government must always exist to respond to the will of the people. But our laws must always have a durability and consistency that transcends the interests of any particular group or individual. ♠

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May

Events

Business Law, Real Property & Bankruptcy Section

Topic: Uniform Commercial Code

Speaker: Jonathan Hayes, Esq.

Date: May 3

Time: 12:00 noon

Place: SFVBA Conference Room

Cost: \$25 members prepaid; \$30 at the door
\$30 non-members prepaid; \$35 at the door

MCLE: 1 Hour

Probate & Estate Planning Section

Topic: Update from the Central District

Panel: Commissioner Mitchell Beckloff and
Judge Michael Levanas

Date: May 9

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

MCLE: 1 Hour

Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section

Topic: Why Firms Should Go Paperless

Speaker: Anthony Zinnanti, Esq.

Date: May 10

Time: 12:00 noon

Place: SFVBA Conference Room, Woodland Hills

Cost: \$20 members prepaid; \$25 at the door
\$25 non-members prepaid; \$30 at the door

MCLE: 1 Hour

Workers' Compensation Section

Topic: Artificial Disc Replacement Surgery

Speaker: Daniel Capen, M.D.

Date: May 17

Time: 12:00 noon

Place: Encino Glen Restaurant, Encino

Cost: \$30 members prepaid; \$35 at the door
\$35 non-members prepaid; \$45 at the door

MCLE: 1 Hour

Litigation Section

Topic: Employment Litigation for Non-Employment Attorneys

Speaker: Cynthia Elkins, Esq.

Date: May 18

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

MCLE: 1 Hour

Family Law Section

Topic: What to do When your Client has a Substance Abuse Problem

Speaker: Commissioner Gretchen Wellman Taylor

Date: May 22

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

MCLE: 1 Hour Prevention of Substance Abuse

Women Lawyers Section

Topic: Differing Roles of Women Lawyers

Panel: Roundtable Discussion

Date: May 25

Time: 12:00 noon

Place: SFVBA Conference Room

Cost: \$25 members prepaid; \$30 at the door
\$30 non-members prepaid; \$35 at the door

MCLE: 1 Hour

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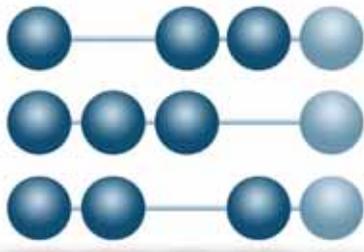
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