

Inner Chambers

Newsletter of the Federal Magistrate Judges Secretaries Association

From the President

HELLO OUT THERE!

The By-Laws require that the President of the Association "shall issue a Call to the Annual Meeting to all members of this Association not later than sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting." So, HELLO OUT THERE, this is your call! The Conference Chair, Denise Peebles, and her St. Louis Committee have been hard at work with the hundreds of details that go along with holding a national conference. You will be receiving your registration materials in July and we believe the entire program is an excellent one. Denise and the other members of the Committee are to be commended for all they have done to ensure that this conference is an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for all of us. As members of FMJSA, you have received your official call to the conference --we eagerly await your response!

In June, I attended a meeting of the Judicial Secretaries Advisory Group in Washington, D.C. I was invited in my capacity as President of FMJSA as were the Presidents of the other Associations, Victoria Hollard of the Federal Judicial Secretaries Association and Velma Smith of the Association of Bankruptcy Judicial Assistants. It was an absolute delight to meet with all of the members of the JSAG and the other Association Presidents. The Deputy Assistant Director of Human Resources and Statistics, R. Townsend Robinson, is the Chair of JSAG and she and her staff prepared a very full and highly informative agenda for the meeting with input from the JSAG members.

Following are a few highlights of the meeting:

TITLE CHANGE: As this is the area which I receive the most calls, I'll deal with it first. It became very clear that the only chance we have of obtaining a title change is if the three Associations band together to choose a single title that we can all agree upon. This single proposal would then be taken by Ms. Robinson to the Judicial Resources Committee for review. Ms. Robinson is not going to take several different possible titles to the JRC for the members of that committee to determine what the title should be. The agenda for the JRC is extremely heavy each time that committee meets and the members simply are not going to spend their time on this topic unless there is unanimity among the Associations. We must be responsible for our own destiny in this regard. The three current Association Presidents concurred that this topic would be brought up at the respective business meetings to attempt to come to a consensus.

The title "judicial assistant" is not one of the available options. This title is already being used by the U.S. Supreme Court for positions which carry very different duties. The payroll system, etc., will not allow two positions with vastly different duties to have the same title. Over the next few months, I will be collecting suggestions of possible titles to take to our conference in St. Louis. If you have some ideas along this line, please contact me prior to September 19. It will be necessary to run these suggestions by Ms. Robinson prior to the conference to make sure they are not already being used somewhere in the judicial system. While some may view this as a setback to our request for a title change, I believe we can look on it as just one more step in the path toward this goal. Ms. Robinson is very amenable to helping us; we just need to do our part.

MID-CAREER RETIREMENT PROGRAMS:

Through the efforts of the members of JSAG as well as R. Townsend Robinson, Terri Tinsley, Chief, Education and Training Branch, and Carolyn Hamer, Retirement Training Officer, the Mid-Career Retirement Programs are alive and well and have received tremendous accolades for their informative and interesting presentations. Contact any of the above at the AO for future dates and locations.

IN CASE OF AN UNEXPECTED VACANCY IN A JUDGESHIP:

Many judicial secretaries have suddenly found themselves without a job when the judge they work for dies in office or there is an unexpected vacancy in the judgeship. Upon contacting the Clerk's office about openings, they have learned that the saved grade/saved pay rule requires that the judicial secretary must be paid at the rate she was receiving when working as a judicial secretary despite the fact that the position in the Clerk's Office may actually be set lower. For example, the secretary is probably a JS-11, whereas the Clerk's Office position may be equivalent to a JS-9. In the past, it was hard for secretaries to obtain those positions because the Clerk did not want to have to pay the higher salary. Through the efforts of JSAG, approval has now been given which will allow the Budget Division in Washington to make up the difference between the lower salary and the higher one which the secretary has been receiving, thus the extra amount would not be coming out of the Clerk's Office budget. While approval was not given for circumstances in which a judge simply retires, this is a terrific step forward for all of us since our jobs are totally dependent on the judge we are working for and, while it doesn't guarantee us a new position, we certainly are more attractive candidates.

Over the one and one-half days we worked together in Washington, many more topics were discussed. Space does not permit any further discussion here, but please contact me if you are interested in additional information.

Finally, we need to look to that old adage about "strength in numbers." We are much more likely to succeed in obtaining the educational opportunities we need, the title change we've worked for, and an increase in networking possibilities if our numbers go up. If you know of someone in your district who is not yet a member of FMJSA, please make a copy of this newsletter and pass it along. We are all busy people, but please take a moment now to think about someone who is not currently a member but who might be with a little one-on-one encouragement from you. Many thanks to all of you! Hope you enjoy your summer!

**Coalition Thinking:
What's in it for FMJSA?
by Susan Thurman Slade**

When associations initiate the sharing of useful information with other associations, adjunct groups, agencies, and individuals that support them, a wealth of unanticipated information, ideas, and materials springs forth in return. The coalition relationship, while it may not be one that will last forever, will flourish and spread up and out like lightning.

Coalition stems from the word *alliance*, meaning "formal association." When "co" is added to the word *alliance*, the meaning changes slightly to imply a less formal, but nonetheless sound connection or union. So (you may be thinking) ... what does this have to do with FMJSA? Through coalitions, associations and their members can get cutting edge information, borrow innovative ideas, and avoid "reinventing the wheel." "Coalition thinkers" have a philosophy that's unique. Instead of thinking "here's what I know, and I need to keep this information in my head somewhere," a coalition thinker's brain thinks "here's what I know ... now who else can I share this information with?" When you are part of a growing association, like FMJSA, one of the smartest things

that can be done is to bring coalition thinkers into your membership, provide them with leadership opportunities, and create groups and committees which subscribe to this philosophy and are good at practicing it.

Now, here are some practical coalition-building how-tos. Many of these concepts were gleaned from a recent presentation given by Ed Cosgrove, a Court Training Specialist in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1) Give all FMJSA members an opportunity to brainstorm and talk about the types of coalitions they think they would like to build (e.g., with other federal judiciary secretary associations, state or local judicial and legal assistant associations, Federal Court Clerks Association (FCCA), Clerk's Offices and their resources throughout the country, people or agencies that work with judicial secretaries frequently or represent their interests, the Federal Judicial Center and its Training Specialist network, etc.). Consider objectives for building these relationships as well. Define what FMJSA can offer to coalition partners and be clear about the needs and goals of FMJSA.

2) Consider inviting coalition partners to participate in FMJSA committees, projects, and meetings. Do current committees and project groups contain only individuals who are federal judicial secretaries? Do they include Clerk's Office staff? other federal employees? state court judicial assistants? Are there other groups and individuals who can be tapped and who may have something to offer in the private sector, in your communities, in your families? Can

coalition partnerships benefit your association's growth?

3) Document your coalitions and their resources, including FMJSA members. Consider Internet and J-NET possibilities for automating an "accessible-to-anyone-anywhere" FMJSA organization and member resources map. In other words, chart out and make available the skills, knowledge, and abilities that FMJSA members have so others can call upon FMJSA members when needed.

As you ponder the coalition thinking concept and consider how it might take shape, why not share the *Inner Chambers* with a peer or colleague, taking a moment to brag about FMJSA. And while you are bragging, continue to consider how your skills, knowledge, and abilities can be useful to FMJSA. For example, if you are an "okay" writer and your friend is a good editor, write an article together for the *Inner Chambers*; if you enjoy sketching or drawing, why not offer a cartoon for the next newsletter issue. The point is, stay involved and keep learning and you will soon find yourself in the midst of an exciting variety of coalitions.

Susan Thurman Slade currently works as a Training Specialist for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia coordinating and providing local training for approximately 115 employees in four divisional offices. Susan brings a national court perspective to her work in education, having worked three years with the Federal Judicial Center (FJC) in Washington on program development, workshop planning, and curriculum design. Her "court roots" extend back to her employment with the Bankruptcy Administrator's Office in Charlotte, North Carolina which equipped her with a foundation for teaching and training in the federal court arena.

Susan T. Slade, M.A. Training Specialist, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Albert V. Bryan U.S. Courthouse, 401 Courthouse Square, Alexandria, VA 22314-5798, Phone (703) 299-2180, Fax: (703) 299-2108. Internet e-mail address: Susan.Slade@vaed.uscourts.gov.

The editor wants to take this opportunity to personally thank SUSAN for such a wonderful and thought-provoking article and we hope that she will continue to challenge us with such ideas. We have included Susan's address so that our membership may take advantage of the opportunity to visit with Susan about ideas generated from this article.

Let's meet three of our Circuit Reps

From the 1st Circuit Deborah Perates

Debbie works with Magistrate Judge Zachary R. Karol in Boston, Massachusetts and has done so for three-and-a-half years. Previously she was a secretarial major at North Shore Community College, Beverly, MA and had a business course of study at Lynn English High School, Lynn, MA.

She and her husband, John, have three daughters: Eleni, age 11 and twins, Deena and Johanna, age 7. Debbie enjoys parenting, reading, cooking, sewing, photography and skiing.

She has had prior experience with a legal firm in Boston and was a Deputy Clerk for the Hon. A. David Mazzone, USDC, Boston, MA and a secretary for the U.S. Probation and Parole Department, USDC, Boston. Prior to joining the federal government she was employed as an accounting secretary by New England Telephone & Telegraph.

There are seven magistrate judges in Boston, including 1 from Worcester and 1 from Springfield. Each USMJ is paired with at least two District Court judges and the work is distributed by each respective judge to their assigned USMJ.

Her present duties include (a) conducting a wide-range of administrative, secretarial and legal tasks with Judge Karol's chambers and the Clerk's Office; (b) maintenance of chambers law library; (c) overseeing the court and personal calendar of Judge Karol; (d) editing and proofreading opinions, memoranda and orders, occasionally drafting and editing simple orders; (e) copying, mailing/distributing Judge Karol's various opinions; (f) overseeing all pending motions and tracking opposition periods of same; (g) maintaining close contact with paired District Judges' staff; (h) upon referral of a case, organizing and overseeing court case files; (i) monitoring criminal cases assigned to Judge Karol; (j) regularly assisting as courtroom deputy in both civil and criminal proceedings and other duties as well.

From the 8th Circuit Becky Kaldem

Becky works with Magistrate Judge Bobby E. Shepherd in El Dorado, Arkansas. She graduated from Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, Arkansas with a B.A. in commercial art and has approximately 16 hours of paralegal education.

She and husband Bill have a son Grant who is a high school senior and a daughter Erika in the seventh grade.

She has worked for Judge Shepherd for 18 years, starting as his legal secretary in a law firm in El Dorado, following him into private practice and when he became a partner in another firm and finally when he became a circuit-chancery judge she became his court reporter. Prior to her employment in the legal field she worked for J.C. Penney doing displays, ads and office work.

She loves to read, sew and watercolor.

There are two magistrate judges in her district and the cases are divided by divisions - they handle three divisions and the other magistrate judge handles the other three divisions.

Presently she does the JS 43 report, monitors pending motions, keeps track of files, prepares weekly in-house docket - prison and social security in forma pauperis, prepares final draft of Judge's decisions, prisoner correspondence, sets settlement conferences, keeps the Judge's calendar, answers the telephone, substitutes for courtroom deputy/ECRO, incoming and outgoing mail, prepares orders for service and does all filing and opening and closing of files.

From the 10th Circuit Priscilla Miller

Priscilla works with Magistrate Judge Joe Galvan in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and has done so for a year-and-a-half. She is a graduate of the American Institute of Banking and a myriad of seminars sponsored by the Federal Judicial Center.

She has one son and a daughter who has two girls ages 5 and 3.

She was a secretary U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, technician with the General Services Administration, and with the U.S. District Court for New Mexico and the U.S. Courts of the Seattle/Tacoma area.

She loves dancing, taking care of grandchildren, and contacting former deputies from around the country.

There are two magistrate judges in Las Cruces and they divide criminal duty on a monthly basis. She is responsible for civil case management, all reporting functions, personally mails out reports and recommendations, orders generated in civil matters and total calendar control.

At the New Orleans Conference I asked all Circuit Reps to send me a biographical sketch and the three ladies above have done so. For the rest of you - we would love to meet you and know about you. Please take a moment and let me hear from you before our September-October newsletter.

Remember that the secretaries of the magistrate judges in Dallas put together this newsletter for your benefit. Please contact either Nancy Smith, 214-767-2974, Ann Garrett, 214-767-0279, Judy Murray, 214-767-2954 or Judi Andrew, 214-767-8274 at anytime with any suggestions or items of interest.

1997 CONFERENCE UPDATE

If you have been thinking about attending the FMJSA conference -- make plans now to come to St. Louis and meet your colleagues from across the country. We've been working with ABA and have come up with some very exciting speakers: Michael Berney, Training Specialist with the Federal Judicial Center, who will present an outstanding program on conflict resolution; Myra Howze Shiplett, Assistant Director of the office of Human Resources and Statistics of the Administrative Office will speak and answer questions regarding personnel issues; and a very dynamic financial planner will address the members regarding investing and retirement planning. You'll never forgive yourself if you miss this! The agenda is already very full, so plan to arrive on Wednesday, October 15th, and be ready for an early start on the 16th! We have three full days of information and education planned, and will conclude on Saturday evening with a banquet on our very own private river boat cruise! The weather in St. Louis in October is beautiful. The hotel is within walking distance of the Gateway Arch, gaming boats, shopping and restaurants. So mark your calendar and don't let anything keep you away. We look forward to welcoming you to St. Louis. Watch for the registration packets in July.

INTERNET

The Internet and Intranet (J-Net) are now available, at least in some courts. Talk to your Systems Administrator if you are interested in having one or both installed in chambers.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN BOOKLETS

Two new Thrift Savings Plan booklets were published in March 1997 and are now available (ask in your Clerk's Office):

Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees and Guide to TSP Investments, published by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Cathie Brodowski, c/o Judge Mary Pat Trostle, Wilmington, DE

Kathy Clemmons, c/o Judge Dixon, Bowling Green, KY

Danielle Eichhorn, c/o Judge Gregory Hollows, Sacramento, CA

Debra E. B. Gisler, c/o Judge Lynch, Ft. Pierce, FL

Dwendy Huff, c/o Judge Platt, Midland, TX

Heidi L. Jordan, c/o Judge McQuaid, Reno, NV

Janet Mazzaglia, c/o Judge Hollis G. Best, Yosemite, CA

Kathy Pritchard, c/o Judge Moyer, Louisville, KY

Julia Stopa, c/o Judge Heckman, Buffalo, NY

Ann Telles, c/o Judge Burns, San Diego, CA

CHANGES IN ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Jacqueline Archambault, St. Louis, Mo - new FAX No. 324-539-3514

Karen Daumer, South Bend, IN - new telephone 219-246-8100 and new FAX 219-246-8106

Diane Demers, Flint, MI - new telephone 810-341-7855 and new FAX 810-341-7859

Lucy House Hamilton, Houston, TX - new address 515 Rusk Avenue, Room 7720, Houston, TX 77002

Deborah Perates, Boston, MA - new FAX 617-330-0923

MEMBERSHIP ARTICLE

As we go to press, we have 108 members which is significantly lower than our membership last year. Although the Circuit Representatives have been attempting to reach out to all members and non-members, they cannot do it alone. We all need to put forth an effort to recruit and retain members to keep the Association viable and active.

I can personally say the camaraderie and contacts I have established with members of the Association have been invaluable. When required to contact another district for information, I use my Membership Directory and have been able to speak to a member of the Association in the other district. As we all know, it is more productive to speak with someone on a personal basis than to try to get information from a total stranger. Also, I (as well as a number of other Arizona judicial secretaries) would have missed out on the mid-career retirement seminar offered in Phoenix if it had not been a call from Frances Hernandez (Fresno), which was followed by a call from Nancy Smith (Dallas), Jan Caldwell (Portland) and Denise Peebles (St. Louis)-- all counter-parts I have met through the Association!

I urge all of you to do whatever you can to promote our Association!

ANN SHERMAN

Tel: 602-514-7240

FAX: 602-514-7096

FROM THE TREASURER

The balance in the FMJSA account is \$8,149.19.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The FMJSA Constitution and Bylaws require that the membership be notified of all amendments at least 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting. The following changes have been recommended by the Board of Directors and/or Executive Committee during the past two years: (Language to be omitted is underlined; new recommended language in italics; explanatory comment in bold follows.)

→ Article 2.4 **DUES:** Voting members and associate members shall be required to pay annual dues by January 1 March 1 of each year as provided by these Bylaws. Dues of new members may be pro-rated quarterly. In order to be eligible to vote for the election of officers, voting members must be members of record by June 30 of the current year.

Comment: The new deadline is in keeping with our current practice. We have historically not pro-rated dues since the amount is only \$25.00 and we have been lenient as to when dues are accepted.

→ Article 2.5 **REMOVAL OF MEMBERS:** A member shall be automatically and promptly removed from membership in the Association for failure to pay the requisite membership dues by January 31 March 1. *Upon a motion duly passed by the Board of Directors, removal of a member may be stayed and an extension granted for payment of annual dues.*

Comment: Needed for consistency with Article 2.4 and in keeping with our current practice.

→ Article 3.4 **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Election of officers shall be conducted at the Annual Meeting and shall be by written ballot. A simple majority (51%) of the ballots cast shall elect. Eligibility for election to office shall be the same as eligibility to vote therefor.

Comment: This change allows for election of officers and circuit representatives by mail prior to the Annual Conference.

→ Article 3.5 **NOMINATING/VOTING PROCEDURE:** Members shall submit nominations to the Nominations and Elections Committee after securing the acceptance of the nominee. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall prepare a ballot and distribute to each eligible, voting member present at the Annual Meeting. A written ballot shall be prepared by the Nominations and Elections Committee and shall be mailed to all eligible voting members. Each Member shall vote for one candidate for each office, but may vote for only the Circuit Representative from the circuit in which the member is employed. Members unable to attend the Annual Meeting shall be allowed to vote by proxy ballot. Ballots shall be returned to a Teller who will be one of the members of the Nominations and Elections Committee who is not running for office and who is not the Parliamentarian. The Teller shall count the ballots returned and send the ballots with a completed tally to the Parliamentarian for recounting and certification. No balloting will take place at the Annual Meeting unless there is a tie from the written ballots returned by the voting members.

Comment: Changes needed to allow election of officers and directors by mail prior to Annual Conference.

→ Article 3.6 **RUNOFF ELECTIONS:** In the event of a tie vote or a lack of a majority vote in an office, a runoff election shall be held *at the Annual Meeting*, and a simple majority (51%) of the eligible voting members present shall elect prevail. *All eligible voting members attending the Annual Meeting shall be entitled to vote in a runoff elections for ties occurring in the office of President, President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. In the event of a tie for one or more of the Circuit Representatives, only those eligible voting members attending who are employed in the affected circuit(s) shall be eligible to vote in the runoff election for that circuit.* Only two candidates receiving the most votes will be considered in any runoff.

Comment: Clarifies runoff election procedure.

→ Article 4.4 **SECRETARY:**

(b) Shall maintain a copy of all legal and official correspondence issuing from the Association and shall maintain a complete set of original and amended Constitution and Bylaws and Resolutions of the Association. *Shall maintain a current copy of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association in a format as approved by the Executive Committee.*

Comment: To allow for continuity of record keeping.

→ Article 4.5 **TREASURER:**

(c) Shall furnish a bond in an amount directed by the Executive Committee *when the aggregate balance of all funds held by the Association exceeds \$10,000*, the premium for which shall be paid by the Association.

Comment: Avoids expense of bond when funds of Association are low.

→ Article 5.2 **ANNUAL MEETING: MEMBERS:** The Annual Meeting and Educational Conference of this Association shall be held yearly. Specific date and location of the Annual Meeting shall be determined by vote of the members. at a preceding Annual Meeting.

Comment. Allows for selection of annual conference site to be made at a time other than the Annual Conference, should the Board of Directors so desire. Change of heading to "Annual Meeting" for descriptive purposes.

→ Article 6.1 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, President-Elect, *Immediate Past President*, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall: (c) have authority to *expend funds on behalf of the Association. spend amounts not to exceed \$75.00.*

Comment: Adds the Immediate Past President to the Executive Committee. Allows Executive Committee to approve all expenditures, regardless of amount.

→ **ARTICLE 7.3**

(f) Membership. This committee shall promote membership and membership retention of this Association. It will be composed of the President-Elect Secretary and the Circuit Representatives.

Comment: In keeping with our current practice, the membership committee is chaired by the Secretary of the FMJSA.

→ (h) The Chairman of the Annual Conference shall make a complete report to the Treasurer as to income and expenses of the Annual Conference within sixty (60) days of the

1997 ROSTER OF OFFICERS AND CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVES

- President Candace Jones, Reno, NV
Phone No. 702-686-5855
President-Elect Flay Sambrone-Metoyer, New Orleans, LA
Phone No. 504-589-7620
Secretary Ann H. Sherman, Phoenix, AZ
Phone No. 602-514-7240
Treasurer Paula Coley, Norfolk, VA
Phone No. 757-441-3544
DC Cir. Sylvia Brown, Washington, D.C.
Phone No. 202-273-0592
1st Cir. Deborah Perates, Boston, MA
Phone No. 617-223-4736
2nd Cir. Sandra Wilson, Buffalo, NY
Phone No. 716-551-3141

- 3rd Cir. Juanita Davis-White, Philadelphia, PA
Phone No. 215-597-1207
4th Cir. Laura Addington, Greenville, SC
Phone No. 864-235-7682
5th Cir. Nancy Smith, Dallas, TX
Phone No. 214-767-2974
6th Cir. Linda May Cornwell, Ashland, KY
Phone No. 606-329-2952
7th Cir. Deborah Mitchell, Indianapolis, IN
Phone No. 317-226-7572
8th Cir. Rebecca Kaldem, El Dorado, AR
Phone No. 501-863-3173
9th Cir. Frances Hernandez, Fresno, CA
Phone No. 209-498-7325
10th Cir. Priscilla Miller, Las Cruces, NM
Phone No. 505-527-6918
11th Cir. Joan Connors, Miami, FL
Phone No. 305-536-4302

terms:

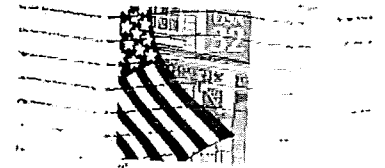
PRESIDENT PRESIDENT-ELECT
SECRETARY TREASURER
11 CIRCUIT REPS [one for each Circuit]

Anyone who is a member of the Association is eligible to run for any of the offices with the exception of each of the Circuit Representatives. In that case, the person(s) who are running may only be nominated by someone from that Circuit and may only be voted upon by members employed in that Circuit.

So we need to begin putting together a list of those members who are interested in having their names placed into nomination for the various offices. DON'T BE SHY -- you can nominate yourself! Please send your nominations to Diane Demers, Chairperson, Nominations & Elections Committee, 600 Church St., Room 104, Federal Bldg., Flint, MI 48502 or call at 810-341-7855 or FAX to 810-341-7859 on or before JULY 31, 1997.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO NOMINATE THE FOLLOWING

Vertical lines for nomination with labels: PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT-ELECT, SECRETARY, TREASURER, CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVE, SIGNED, [Name of Person Nominating], [Phon]



Office of United States Magistrate
 Judge
 1100 Commerce, Rm 14E9
 Dallas, Tx 75242

Carol R. VINSON
 c/o The Honorable Diane K. Vescovo
 167 N. Main St., Room 921
 Memphis, TN 38103

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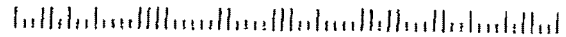


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