

ProBonoNY

AN ACCESS TO JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE POOR

NEWSLETTER

For Local Action Committees

SPONSORED BY THE NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM, OFFICE OF THE HONORABLE JUANITA BING NEWTON, DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE FOR JUSTICE INITIATIVES
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Volume 2, Number 7 October 2008

ORANGE COUNTY PRO BONO DEVELOPMENT

By Lewis G. Creekmore

Lewis Creekmore is a member of the Ninth District/Orange County Pro Bono Committee and is Deputy Director of Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. The Orange County Committee has been exploring possibilities of providing pro bono legal assistance for senior citizens. Lewis was delegated to discuss possibilities with the Orange County Senior Council, and his report follows. More details later, as the program develops. (-Ed.)

On Friday, October 17, I attended the regular meeting of the Orange County Senior Council. Organized by the Office for the Aging, the Senior Council is a group of representatives from senior clubs all over the County. More than 60 clubs participate, and about 25 were represented at the October 17 meeting. Some of the clubs have memberships over 2000 people, but most have in the range of 50 to 100 members.

The President of the Senior Council, Vincent Poloniak, retired Director of Community Development for Orange County, is also the President of the Florida (New York) Senior Club and representative for six clubs from Warwick.

The group was very enthusiastic to hear that there might be volunteer attorneys available to assist members of their groups and their communities who survive on fixed incomes and are at or near the poverty level. They had numerous questions about the scope of services that may be available. Several expressed particular interest in rights of people in nursing homes, and cited incidents in which friends or family members were treated in an undignified manner or worse while in a facility. Many of them acknowledged knowing of instances of actual abuse. All expressed interest because they know folks in their 80's and 90's who need

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assistance with a variety of matters, including Medicare, Social Security, and advance directives.

Anne Coon, Senior Citizens Program Director for the Office of the Aging, has offered to include in their future newsletters updates and fliers that describe our program. The Silver Voice is circulated to more than 10,000 senior citizens around Orange County. She also invited our committee, and LSHV, to be guests on her weekly radio show on WWLE, 1170 am. We are booked to appear for taping of her show on November 6; the program will be broadcast at 1:00 p.m. that day.

News from the Seventh District

By Linda Kostin

On November 19, Rochester attorneys will have an opportunity to mix and mingle with members of the Seventh District Pro Bono Committee and the staff of VLSP (Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County) on a tour of the High Falls Brewery. During this informal recruitment event, attendees will hear brief testimonials from peers who do pro bono work, as well as an overview of pro bono opportunities available through VLSP. Brewery tours are new to Rochester, so we are hoping that the novelty of this event will be a draw.

A more traditional recruitment event is being planned for early 2009, modeled after two highly successful CLE programs in the 8th District, co-sponsored by VLP and the Erie County Bar Ass'n in 2003 and 2004, "The Ethics of Humor in Litigation." We are forming a steering committee to recruit judges and attorneys who possess the humor and panache to pull off a little standup comedy with their ethics presentations. Our committee's co-chair, Judge Van Strydonck, has suggested Judge David Larimer, who will soon be retiring from the federal bench. In addition to an opportunity to meet the "stars" at a reception after the presentation, attendees will receive ethics credit in exchange for agreeing to take a pro bono case within six months.

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Notes and Comments **By John Ritchie**

ANNUAL REPORTS. Just a reminder: please plan in advance to prepare each committee's annual report—narrative and quantitative information on 2008 activities and events, plus any new plans for 2009. Last year's committee reports will shortly be on a ProBonoNY Central web page, and the same will later apply to this year's reports. Please aim to submit the reports by early December.

KINCARE CONFERENCE. A subject that may be of interest and importance in your district is providing legal services for needy kinship families—families in which grandparents or other relatives have needed to become primary caregivers for children. A conference is scheduled in Albany on December 2, 2008, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, please see the flier below. I plan to attend and will report in the Newsletter. But any committee considering supporting pro bono work in this area might want to send a representative to attend this conference.

NYS Kincare Coalition, AARP and Empire Justice Center Request Your Participation at a Key Legal Stakeholders' Meeting

Legal Services for Kinship Families

The New York State Kincare Coalition provides critical support and technical assistance to kinship families across New York State. In its most recent review of services—and gaps—Coalition members and the families they serve found a tremendous need for legal assistance tailored specifically for kinship families. The Coalition, AARP and Empire Justice Center are joining together to host a brainstorming session on the legal needs of kincare families, the current supports available to them and a number of successful emerging models for meeting these unique legal needs. The goals of this meeting are to review the recommendations from the Framework for the five-year action plan relating to legal services for kinship families and to develop a blueprint for increasing legal assistance for these families. The Coalition's latest report (linked below), "Kinship Care in New York: A Five-Year Framework for Action," presents specific recommendations for legal assistance, see section V: Legal Assistance.

<http://www.nysnavigator.org/sfl/documents/2008reportwithchanges.pdf>

We hope you can join us—

- Tuesday, December 2, 2008: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany

To RSVP and for further information, please contact: lpolakoff@aarp.org.

Support provided by the AARP Foundation through a generous grant from the New York Life Foundation.