

An Advocate for the Valley Community



ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2008, the San Fernando Valley Bar Association enjoyed its 82nd Installation Dinner and Annual Membership meeting. I am merely the latest in a long line of presidents and am looking forward to building on the work of so many other bar leaders, trustees and members.

As one of the oldest voluntary bar associations in California, the SFVBA is also one of the largest with a membership of about 2,100. It was formed at about the same time as the State Bar came into existence as a unified bar. The SFVBA has been devoted to serving the lawyer members, the community, and the courts since its inception. For example, the SFVBA was active in bringing the first courthouse to the north Valley, which were the trailers that still linger behind the North Valley District courthouse and which served the Valley for many years.

Currently, our 2,100 members are served by 11 sections (including Probate, Workers' Compensation, Litigation, ADR) and as new areas of the law develop, we add sections as necessary to meet the needs of our members.

At the board level, there are about 12 committees, including ARS, Programs, Bench-Bar, and many more. All members are welcome to participate in sections and committees. We encourage you to join us for one event or as many as your time and interest allows.

The Board of Trustees welcomed five new trustees in September: Natasha Dawood, Brent Finch, Carmen McDonald-Goldberg, Lisa Miller and John Stephens. I and the rest of the Board look forward to working with them. Please keep in mind that the Board meets every second Tuesday. Members who have questions or just want information are welcome to call any member of the Board.

Sue Bendavid had a very successful year as president, and just as she built on and continued the work of those who came before her, I will have the privilege of following in her foot steps and building on her work. A lot has happened this past year and we will follow up to make these innovations a lasting success. For example, as part of our commitment to diversity, an Explorer

Post was formed to educate teenage students about the law and judicial system. Twenty young people are participating this year.

We adopted Maurice Sendac Middle School and committed to support the school in bringing programs about the law to the students on an ongoing basis and teaming with them to promote the law, civil society, and careers in law and justice.

We have also served the community in many ways. This year, the *Daily News* added an "Ask a Lawyer" column in which ARS panel members are answering questions on various legal issues posed by lay people through the newspaper.

This has been a busy year in our relationship with the courts. We worked with the Los Angeles Superior Court on the creation of a new PowerPoint presentation to be shown to jurors when they report for jury service. This will greatly enhance the jurors experience when it is launched.

Our Bench-Bar Committee meets on a regular basis with our Valley judges and supports the court through volunteer programs, including VAST, the Probate Attorney Settlement Conference Panel, and the revitalized Temporary Judge Program. We also participate in the state-wide Bench-Bar Coalition under the auspices of the Administrative Office of the Courts. SFVBA members go to Sacramento twice a year to lobby the legislature on matters of great concern to our courts.

Direct services to members also have grown with new benefits, including Fastcase for legal research. *Valley Lawyer* is a full-fledged magazine. Our first annual Golf Tournament took place on October 13.

The SFVBA is active on the state and national level as well. We have one delegate to the ABA's House of Delegates. We also have 12 delegates and 12 alternates to the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations (CDCBA), which met in late September in Monterey. It is now time to start working on resolutions for the 2009 meeting in San Diego. Anyone wanting to serve on the delegation or with issues concerning the laws of our state can contact me or any member of the delegation. This is a chance to have a voice on issues that matter to you.

The SFVBA also maintains fruitful relationships with other entities including the Valley Community Legal Foundation. Every year we enjoy the Law Day Gala. After years of work by the Foundation and others, the new children's waiting room in Van Nuys opened in October. This holiday season we will collect new toys and books to donate to the children's waiting room. Details of suitable toys and books will be distributed soon.

We also have affiliate relationships with many bar associations including the Los Angeles County Bar Association, Santa Clarita Valley Bar Association (which has a member on our Board of Trustees), Mexican American Bar Association, Italian American Lawyers Association, and the Multicultural Bar Alliance.

This year, we will build on the work of those who went before us. I ask all our members to support the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, and the community, and this year especially, to support our courts and our judges. ♠

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