



Adverse Witness Editorial Board

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The Adverse Witness is pleased to feature articles submitted by Collier County Bar Association members, affiliates and the general public that may be of interest to Collier County Bar Association's membership. The Collier County Bar Association does not verify the accuracy of the information contained in the articles published in the Adverse Witness, nor are the articles published in the Adverse Witness intended to express the views of the Collier County Bar Association. If you have any questions or concerns about information contained in articles published in the Adverse Witness, please contact the author of the article directly.

Adverse Witness

December 2011_ ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS



President's Message Happy Holidays!



Legal Aid Notes Award Winners Announced



Calendar Make note of upcoming meetings, luncheons and events



Hardt of the Matter Use of Demonstrative Evidence at Trial



Guest Editorial Asset Protection for LLCs





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE By Maggie McMorrow, Esq.



Happy holidays!

Well, it's official - the holidays are upon us! As I write this message, there are 10 days left before Thanksgiving, and I just heard "Here Comes Santa Claus" on the radio! It seems like the holidays came fast and furious (and really early) this year. We all are so tied up with our work, our clients, and our day-to-day activities, that sometimes we forget to take the time to enjoy the holiday season. My hope for all of you this year is that you will be able to take some time during the holidays to relax, spend time with family and friends, and enjoy all of the traditions and merriment of the holiday season.

While the CCBA Board is taking off the month of December, Lisa Mead and her staff will be recovering from recent events, and planning our upcoming events.

In November, the Collier County Bar Foundation conducted its annual Pro Bono Clinic in Immokalee. I would like to thank all of the attorneys that took the time to drive to Immokalee on a Saturday morning to volunteer their time for this worthy cause. In addition to the attorney volunteers, several law students from Ave Maria Law School participated in the event. Thanks also to Legal Aid for partnering with the Foundation each year to make this event a success!

The CCBA Holiday Party will be held on Thursday, December 8 at the Naples Bay Resort. This is a fun family event. There will be fun crafts and games for the kids, and of course Santa will be on hand with gifts for the children!

On Saturday, January 14, our annual Barbeque will be held at the home of Joe and Louise Stewart. Larry Farese and his band, The Dazzling DelRays will be the entertainment, and there will be plenty of great food and drink. Each year, the Collier County Bar Foundation chooses a recipient for the proceeds of the annual Barbeque, and this year, the recipient is Grace Place for Children and Families. Grace Place's mission is to teach literacy, language and life skills to at-risk children and impoverished families. Please join us to support this great charity and to have a great time!

Happy Holidays!



Remember when?

The Zulian family posed with Santa at the 2008 Holiday party.

"I would like

to thank all of the attorneys that took the time to drive to Immokalee

on a Saturday morning to

volunteer their

time for this worthy cause. "

LEGAL AID NOTES By Jeffrey A. Ahren, Esq.



SERVICE OF COLLIER COUNTY

Legal Aid Service of Collier County is committed to working alongside the private bar and membership of CCBA to make the Collier Lawyers Care pro bono attorney program the best of its kind in the State of Florida. Two immediate goals they want to achieve are increasing the number of pro bono volunteer attorneys in the CLC program, and expanding public awareness about CLC and the impact Legal Aid Service of Collier County has on the community by offering free civil legal services to the underserved population of Collier County. To learn more about LASCC and Collier Lawyers Care, contact Mr. Jeffrey A. Ahren or Ms. Ana de la Cruz at (239) 775-4555.

Major award winners announced

Legal Aid Service of Collier County (LASCC) is proud to announce the recipients of the following awards, to be conferred at the 4th Annual Barrister's Bash event at the Hilton Hotel in Naples on April 19, 2012:

Law Firm of the Year - Law Offices of Michelle L. Hill Attorney of the Year - Tamara L. Nicola, Esq. Leadership Award - Patrick H. Neale, Esq. Special Recognition Award – Pro Bono Service – David E. Steckler, Esq. (Professor, Florida Gulf Coast University)

Outstanding Volunteer Service Award - Margaret L. McMorrow, Esq. (Northern Trust)

Look for in-depth profiles on each of these award winners in upcoming issues of Adverse Witness. Legal Aid's 'Attorneys of the Month' will also be honored at the Barrister's Bash. Congratulations to each of our award winners!

What is the 'Barrister's Bash?' It is LASCC's annual Fundraiser Dinner and Awards Ceremony. All members of the legal community, as well as business and community leaders and all friends and supporters are cordially invited. Attending the Barrister's Bash is a great way of demonstrating your support for Legal Aid, while honoring those who will be receiving awards for their outstanding pro bono service to the community. Legal Aid welcomes your support during these challenging times. We need your support more than ever in 2012, as we have assisted a record number of underprivileged clients since 2010 while coping with significant reductions in funding.

This fun and festive event was attended by over 225 patrons last year. The Barrister's Bash is attended each year by many of our local Judges, Attorneys, and Business and Community Leaders. Join us Thursday, April 19, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at Hilton Naples (5111 Tamiami Trail North, Naples FL 34103). Ticket price is \$90 per person and includes dinner, cocktail hour, silent auction, and a community awards ceremony. There are wonderful sponsorship (and advertising) opportunities available. For more information, contact Jeff Ahren at (239) 298-8130 or jahren@legalaid.org , or visit www.legalaid.org/collier and www.barristersbash.org. You can order tickets online, or by contacting Ana De La Cruz at (239) 298-8143 or adelacruz@legalaid.org.

LEGAL AID NEWS AND NOTES

Foreclosure Prevention Breakfast Benefit Recap - Legal Aid would like to thank everyone who attended the October 19, 2011 Foreclosure Prevention Breakfast Benefit held at the Hilton in Naples! Over 125 patrons supported this event, raising almost \$7,000 for Legal Aid and the Housing Development Corp. of SW Florida. The proceeds will be utilized to bolster the foreclosure prevention efforts of these two non-profit agencies. Special thanks to the following sponsors: H2Techonologies, Inc.; Moorings Park; Conant Mediation Center; Sonia Diaz, Esq.; Carl Kuenher; and Isabel Barbosa. Thanks also to the following Table Captains: Salvatori, Wood & Buckel; Patrick H. Neale, Esq.; Deryl Patterson; Quarles & Brady, LLP, and Law Offices of Michelle L. Hill.... Immokalee Pro Bono Clinic Recap - Legal Aid would like to thank all the attorneys who volunteered their time on Saturday, November 5, 2011 to provide pro bono legal services to clients at the RCMA Charter School! This 4th annual Pro Bono Legal Clinic, sponsored by the Collier County Bar Association and co-sponsored by Legal Aid, offered a wide range of free legal services to the members of the public who attended. The Lions Club also offered free vision screening and glasses. We hope that this clinic continues to grow in the future, and Legal Aid applauds the leadership of the CCBA for putting this event together each year! . . . Adopt A Family Holiday Gift Program - Legal Aid will hold the annual 'Gift Exchange Party' on December 2, 2011 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Legal Aid offices. This special event culminates in the children and families receiving the toys and other gifts so generously furnished by our donors. Look for full details about the 2011 'Adopt A Family' program in the January 2012 issue of Adverse Witness. A special thanks to everyone who made a donation this year to brighten the holiday season of an underprivileged child!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Register for any event through Hilda Taylor. Phone: 239-252-8711 htaylor@colliercountybar.org www.colliercountybar.org.

Event Policy

It is the policy of the Collier County Bar Association to request that all reservations for our events are placed at least two days prior to the event.

We are always willing to accommodate our members; however, event sites must order food two days prior to an event.

Also, it is the policy of the Collier County Bar Association to issue refunds ONLY if a member cancels a reservation two days prior to an event. If a member cancels the day before, or the day of an event, a refund will not be issued.

We appreciate your consideration of this policy.

DECEMBER

- 1 Trusts and Estates Section Luncheon Northern Trust, 12:00 p.m. Free Event - Bring your own lunch
- 1 CCWBA Holiday Party Trudy Labell Fine Art Gallery, 5:30 p.m.
- 2 Legal Aid Adopt-a-Family Party Legal Aid Offices, 5:00 p.m.
- 8 Real Estate Section Luncheon Carrabba's, 12:00 p.m. RE Members - \$20; Non-members - \$25
- 8 CCBA Holiday Party Naples Bay Resort, 5:30 p.m. Adults - \$30; Children - \$20; 4 and under - free Cash Bar

- 13 Young Lawyers Board Meeting Cosmo's, 12:00 p.m.
- 13 Trial Law Section Luncheon Bonefish Grill, 12:00 p.m. TL Section Members - \$25; Non-members - \$30
- 13 Inns of Court Naples Bay Resort, 5:45 p.m.
- 14 Trial Law Board Meeting subject to change St. George and the Dragon, 12:00 p.m.
- 23 CCBA Offices Closed /26 for Christmas Holiday
- 30 CCBA Offices Closed for New Year's

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JANUARY

- CCBA Offices Closed for New Year's
 CCBA Board Meeting CCBA Offices, 7:30 a.m.
 CCB Foundation Board Meeting CCBA Offices, 8:30 a.m.
 Young Lawyers' Board Meeting Cosmo's, 12:00 p.m.
 - Trial Law Board Meeting St. George and the Dragon 12:00 p.m.

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- 12 Real Estate Section Luncheon Carrabba's, 12:00 p.m. RE Members - \$20; Non-members - \$25
- 13 CCBA Membership Luncheon Naples Sailing and Yacht Club 12:00 p.m. Members - \$35; Non-members - \$40

- CCB Foundation Bar-B-Q benefiting Grace Place Home of Joe & Louise Stewart 6570 Sable Ridge Road 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. \$40 per individual ticket or two tickets for \$60 CCBA Offices Closed for Martin Luther King Day
- 17 Inns of Court Naples Bay Resort, 5:45 p.m.
- 18 Family Law Section Luncheon Bonefish Grill, 12:00 p.m. FL Members - \$25; Non-members - \$30
- 27 Ethics Seminar, Co-sponsored by the CCWBA, Young Lawyers and Trial Lawyers Naples Bay Resort 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Members - \$60; Non-members - \$70

HARDT OF THE MATTER By Hon. Frederick Hardt, Circuit Judge



Use of demonstrative evidence at trial

Demonstrative evidence is a valuable tool that trial counsel should use to assist the jury in understanding the facts of a case. Demonstrative evidence is not "real evidence" that is commonly offered into evidence at trial. For example, fingerprints, surveillance photos of a crime scene, DNA specimens, blood splatter on clothing, or narcotics are exhibits that actually play a role in the case and which are considered "real evidence."

Real evidence exists because of the activities of the parties or witnesses. It is discoverable and can be preserved, but it is never created by the attorneys.

On the other hand, "demonstrative evidence" is created or prepared by the attorney (or an expert witness or consultant) for use at trial.

Demonstrative evidence is usually in the form of diagrams, charts, aerial photographs or drawings. There is no limit to the creativity of counsel in producing demonstrative evidence. Some complex examples that have been used include "day in the life" videos in personal injury cases, computer simulations of accidents or explosions, anatomical models of the human body or video recreation of a crime scene.

When listening to testimony which describes an event, such as an accident or a crime, jurors will often try to visualize what happened. By using demonstrative evidence, the jury can visualize and better understand the testimony of the witness.

Before demonstrative evidence may be shown to the jury, a proper foundation must be laid.

First, the item should be marked as an exhibit and shown to opposing counsel, just like any other exhibit. Even though demonstrative evidence is generally not admitted into evidence as an exhibit, it becomes part of the record. If the item is large or bulky, counsel should stipulate to substitute a photograph for purposes of the record. The Clerk and the District Court of Appeal will appreciate that.

Second, have the witness testify that the object or exhibit is a fair and accurate reproduction of the item or matter to be depicted or demonstrated.

"Officer Jones, I show you State's Exhibit 9 for identification, which is an aerial photograph. Can you describe what area is shown?"

"Yes, it shows the area where the shooting occurred and the route of pursuit I followed before apprehending the defendant."

"Officer, prior to your testimony, did I ask you to place a red "x" on the aerial photograph and a red line with an arrow to accurately show your route?"

"Yes, you did, counselor."

"And did you do that?"

"Yes, sir."

Third, you may ask the witness if the object or exhibit will aid the jury in understanding a material fact or issue.

"Officer Jones, does Exhibit 9 for identification help explain what you have told us in your testimony?"

"Absolutely, yes."

"Your honor, may the witness stand down to show the jury what is depicted in this aerial photograph?"

The judge asks opposing counsel, "Any objection, counsel?"

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FROM THE BENCH By The Hon. Vince Murphy



"I hereby swear to be civil ..."

Every year, we are privileged to review the *curriculum vita*e of attorneys nominated for the Lion of the Law, and then we undertake the nearly impossible task of selecting one from among the nominees to receive the award. The nominees come from many practice fields, from criminal law to probate practice and everything in between. Even dirt lawyers have made the short list. Many have distinguished themselves in the courtroom, while others have made extraordinary contributions to our profession through The Florida Bar or other outlets. In addition to great success in their fields, something else each of our recipients share in common is what we have come to label generically as, "civility."

The supreme court has recently added a requirement that each new member of The Bar swear to be civil. It should be a matter of concern to all of us when our collective conduct has finally caused the supreme court to act. I have always been a proponent of the adage that the less government we have, the better. Here we have the highest court in our jurisdiction telling us to behave professionally, essentially the way our parents probably taught us.

I hope everyone has made the connection between the first paragraph, above, and the second. The most respected and effective lawyers among us (at least in the opinion of your judiciary) are those whose professional conduct is above the slightest reproach. You will be hard-pressed to recall a single incident where any of our Lions of the Law personally disparaged opposing counsel, or where any of them interrupted an opponent's presentation, or where any of them wrote a letter to a judge, dripping with crudely crafted sarcasm or innuendo about the motives, morals, and ancestry of opposing counsel. That negative form of advocacy may satisfy some primordial urge, but it is not effective. It does not allow your decision-maker to focus on the facts and the law applicable to your client's case.

It should not be the supreme court or any other governmental agency which compels us to behave civilly, nor should it be simply our desire to look good in the public's eye. Whenever you are inclined to act or react inappropriately, think about your Lions of the Law. Think about how positively they are viewed in the eyes of your judges. Then think about how effective is their representation of their clients time after time. Trust me.... there IS a connection!

> "So let us begin anew - remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof."

> > –John Fitzgerald Kennedy

BULLETIN BOARD

Got news? Contact Lisa Mead by calling 252-8711 or drop an email line to Imead@ colliercountybar.org

CLASSIFIED

OFFICE FOR RENT: Attorneys (5) and other professional (1) with one executive office to rent. Attractive building/offices in great location at Pine Ridge and Airport Road, Naples, FL. Space for an assistant, shared conference room with law library and shared kitchen is included in rent of \$700 per month. Call Rob or Kathy at 239-593-1444.

ATTORNEY/PROFESSIONAL OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE FOR SUBLEASE/

SHARE. 1400 Sq. Ft. available for sharing/ sublease, perfect location-close to courthouse, 1100 Fifth Avenue South-Regions Bank Building, top floor. Shared reception, kitchen and conference room areas. For more details call Sue at 239-403-0611.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note that every Wednesday Magistrate Amy Wilson (now officially Amy Ellis) and Magistrate David Friedman will alternate three hours of afternoon hearing time beginning January 4th to hear the same motion practice matters heard by Magistrate James McGarity, III. All attorneys requesting hearing time with Magistrates Wilson and Friedman will be unable for the time being to access Wednesday hearing time on the JACS system. Therefore hearing time must be requested by placing a call to Administrative Assistant Sherry Lucas (252-8670) for that purpose. Please be reminded that the attorney setting the hearing must provide to the assigned Circuit Judge (Hayes, Manalich, Pivacek) the original Order of Referral naming the correct Magistrate and copies for conforming with self-addressed stamped envelopes. The Order of Referral should not be sent to the Office of the Magistrate.

Cohen & Grigsby, a business law firm with headquarters in Pittsburgh, PA and an office in Bonita Springs, FL, is pleased to announce that Florida-based attorney **Thad Kirkpatrick** was recently honored by Florida Rural Legal Services and the Lee County Bar Association for his exceptional pro bono work involving foreclosure matters in Lee County, Florida. Kirkpatrick is a director at Cohen & Grigsby and is a member of the Construction and Real Estate groups. He is Board Certified by The Florida Bar in Real Estate Law and practices in the areas of commercial and residential real estate, real estate development law.

The Florida Bar's Grievance Mediation and Fee Arbitration program is seeking volunteer arbitrators and mediators. This program is offered by The Florida Bar as a public service to our members, clients and the court system and attempts to resolve disputes between attorneys and clients or between attorneys. There is no charge for the parties to engage in our program. Arbitrations and mediations are conducted throughout the state of Florida and are held in the geographical location of the parties. A panel of 3 arbitrators is assigned to hear fee disputes over \$75,000. If the parties elect mediation, the case is assigned to a sole mediator.

Florida Bar members who participate as volunteer arbitrators and/or mediators as part of this program are eligible for CLE credit for an hour-for-hour basis, with a maximum of five (5) credit hours in the area of ethics for the 3-year reporting period.

Please refer to Chapter 14 of The Rules Regulating The Florida Bar for complete information on this program. Eligibility requirements for certification as program arbitrators and/or mediators can be found in the Procedural Rules of Chapter 14.

If you are interested in participating as a volunteer arbitrator and/or mediator for The Florida Bar Grievance Mediation and Fee Arbitration Program, please contact: Susan Austin, Program Administrator The Florida Bar, 651 E. Jefferson Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-2300 (850) 561-5719 saustin@flabar.org

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MEET YOUR FELLOWS By James Molenaar, Esq.



Ten things you may not know about me

- 1. Recently, my petite (5'4") wife and I were blessed with a brand new baby, weighing in at over 10 pounds.
- 2. I was born in Chicago, Illinois raised in Lansing, Illinois.
- 3. I have over 25 years of government service, which began when I was 16 years old as a Law Enforcement Explorer.
- 4. While in college I was an Emergency Medical Technician and coincidently delivered my mail lady's baby boy (and contrary to tradition, she did not name it James, after me).
- 5. I received a Bachelor of Arts from Purdue University, Juris Doctor from Michigan State University College of Law, a Masters of Laws in Information Technology and Privacy Law from the John Marshall Law School, and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Florida.
- 6. I am a graduate of the Chicago Police Academy and served as a police officer while I was in law school.
- 7. After graduating law school, I worked as an associate in my father's law firm for five years, concentrating primarily in the areas of civil litigation, wills, trusts & estates.
- 8. I am a member of the Leadership Collier Class of 2012.
- 9. I am an Assistant State Attorney, presently assigned to the Collier County Economic Crimes Unit; and
- 10. I enjoy speaking in public, on behalf of the State Attorney's Office about different areas of White Collar Crime, including identity theft, the dangers of Facebook and Geotagging, and Elderly Exploitation. Therefore, because I try to take my own advice, I am trying to be a vague as possible about myself and my family in this very public forum.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The law firm of Grant, Fridkin, Pearson, Athan & Crown, P.A. is pleased to announce that **Charles C. Whittington** has joined the firm as an associate. Charles C. Whittington is a graduate of the Florida State University College of Law, where he was a member of Florida State University Law Review and served as a research assistant to Professor Fredrick M. Abbott.

The American Red Cross of Collier County honored **Carl E. Westman**, an attorney in the Naples office of GrayRobinson, P.A., with its annual Legacy Award on Oct. 13. Each year, the Collier County Red Cross recognizes one community member who has made outstanding contributions in the promotion of planned giving and philanthropic endeavors. Mr. Westman practices in the areas of estate planning, charitable planning and estate administration and has experience in health care law, taxation and wealth transfers.

Laird A. Lile, a wills, trusts and estates attorney in Naples, will be a featured presenter at his alma mater, Ohio Northern University, at the 17th annual Estate, Business and Financial Planning seminar scheduled for Nov. 9 in Lima, Ohio. The event is sponsored by ONU's Office of Gift Planning and the Claude W. Pettit College of Law. Lile earned his Juris Doctorate at Ohio Northern University in 1984. An attorney in the state of Florida since 1984, Lile is certified by The Florida Bar as a Wills, Trusts and Estates lawyer and is a Fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. An elected member of the Board of Governors for The Florida Bar and past chair of its Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section. Laird A. Lile, P.A., offers legal counsel on estate- and trust-related matters, including estate planning, estate and trust administration, probate-related litigation and tax matters. The firm's office is located at 3033 Riviera Drive, Suite 104, in Naples. For more information, call 239-649-7778 or visit www.LairdALile.com.

Jacqueline J. Buyze is pleased to announce that her children's book, entitled "A Story of Lawyers," is about to be released! The book, written entirely in rhyme and personalized for each recipient, features illustrated likeness of some of our favorite local attorneys. Published by Mascot Books and illustrated by Klaus Scmidneiser, "A Story of Lawyers" was written to educate children of all ages about the work lawyers do, improve public perceptions, and honor those who admirably serve our wonderful profession. It is the first in a series that Ms. Buyze plans to release and there is nothing like it on the market today. "A Story of Lawyers" will be available nationwide both in stores and on-line with a retail price of \$14.95. Advance purchase is anticipated to begin on December 1 at www.Mascotbooks.com. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Legal Aid of Collier County. For additional information about the book, the author, launch dates and book signings visit www.BuyzeMediation.com or call Jacqueline at 239-404-6926.

The national law firm of Quarles & Brady LLP announced that **Tina M. Eckert** has joined the Firm's Naples office as an associate in the Labor & Employment Group. Prior to joining Quarles & Brady, Ms. Eckert served as a law clerk in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division.

Nicole L. Goetz, P.L., announces the relocation of its office to 4933 Tamiami Trail North, Suite 201, Naples, Florida 34103. Nicole L. Goetz, P.L., is a boutique firm focused on marital and family law at the trial and appellate level. Ms. Goetz can be reached at 239-325-5030 or by e-mail at ngoetz@nlg-pl.com. More information about Ms. Goetz and the firm is located on the web at www.nlg-pl.com.

Patrick C. Coughlan, Esq., President of Conflict Solutions, Portland, and one of the country's leading construction mediators, spoke to the Annual American Bar Association's Forum on Construction Law Conference in Atlanta, on October 14, 2011. The subject of his presentation: ethics in the context of complex construction mediation and what it means to "tell the truth." Conflict Solutions also has offices in Raymond, Maine and Naples and West Palm Beach, Florida.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT for JUDICIAL LAW CLERK Salary \$57,408 - \$96,690* Announcement No.: 12-03 Position open until filled and is available as of January 2012. The judicial law clerk researches issues of law, attends trials and other court proceedings, and acts as advisor, making recommendations based on the law, to the Honorable Virginia M. Covington, United States District Judge. The caseload in the jurisdiction is heavy, and the types of cases presented are varied, often involving novel issues of law. While the nature of the matters presented is serious, the office environment is personable. There is daily interaction with the Judge and other law clerks concerning legal and court-related issues. Minimum Qualification Requirements: At the time of appointment, the applicant must be a law school graduate and must possess excellent research and writing skills, and PC proficiency in Windows and WordPerfect. Experience on the editorial board of law review, moot court, and/or publication of noteworthy article is preferred. Good character, maturity, and willingness to work long hours are also required. Bar membership and post-graduate experience in actual litigation a benefit. Information for Applicants: Employment with the United States District Court offers a generous benefit package, civil and criminal law experience at the federal court level, and an environment providing significant responsibility and challenge. Applicants should submit a cover letter, current resume with class rank, and transcripts to: Federal Clerkship, Attention: 12-03, 801 N. Florida Ave, Suite 1458, Tampa, Florida 33602. Deadline for Receipt of Resumes: All resumes will be considered when received. Selected interviews will be scheduled until the positions arefilled. Due to the volume of applications usually received, receipt of individual applications will not be acknowledged. Calls to chambers to check status of an application are strongly discouraged. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTU-NITY EMPLOYER* Starting salary commensurate with work experience and prior pay history. (Salary may be higher with previous experience as a law clerk to a federal judge.) Applicants must be U.S. citizen or eligible to work in the United States and are subject to a background check. Employees are required to use the Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for payroll deposit.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



Making strides against breast cancer

On October 21st, seventeen Naples law firms participated in a flash mob to support the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer "Put On Your Pink Bra" campaign to end breast cancer.

The organizer, Yale Freeman of Yale T. Freeman, P.A., and his wife Susan got other firms on board and worked out the logistics for the big event. Guerilla Media filmed the "happening" and created a fantastic video (Search "Lawyers v. Breast Cancer, Put On Your Pink Bra Flash Mob" on YouTube).

The following law firms participated, including staff, family members and friends: Aughton Law Firm; Cardillo, Keith & Bonaquist; Cheffy Passidomo; Coleman, Hazzard & Taylor; Cummings & Lockwood; Yale T. Freeman, P.A.; Garber, Hooley & Halloway; Grant, Fridkin, Pearson, Athan & Crown; Hollander & Hanuka; Legal Aid Service of Collier County; Patrick Neale & Associates; The Livingston Firm; Office of Public Defender; Porter Wright; Ross, Lanier & Deifik; Treiser Collins and Vernon Healy.

Why did they do it? Breast cancer or other cancers, in some way, have touched many of the participants' lives and they wanted to show their support for finding a cure. They came together to help promote the American Cancer Society's 5K Walk that was held October 29th at the Village on Venetian Bay. Several people signed up for the walk as a result of the event, and that was the goal: to raise awareness and garner support. Mission accomplished!





GUEST EDITORIAL By Jeff M. Novatt, Esq.



Asset Protection for LLCs

Until last year, many Florida business lawyers believed that the assets owned by a Florida limited liability company ("LLC") were safe from a creditor of an owner of an LLC membership interest, even if the LLC was owned by only one person. The basis for such belief was Florida Statute Section 608.433(4), which provided that a judgment creditor of a member of a Florida LLC could charge the LLC membership interest of the member with the payment of the unsatisfied amount of the creditor's judgment and, to the extent so charged, the judgment creditor only had the rights to the profits and distributions to which such member was otherwise entitled. This statutory provision, which is commonly referred to as the "charging order" statute, did not state that the creditor may become a substitute member of the LLC and thereby have an interest in the assets of the LLC or have any management rights.

However, on June 24, 2010, the Florida Supreme Court, in the case of Olmstead v. Federal Trade Commission, held that Florida law permits a court to order a judgment debtor to surrender all right, title and interest in the debtor's single-member limited liability company to satisfy an outstanding judgment. The practical effect of this case was that a creditor of a person who is the sole member of a Florida LLC could take over the ownership of the LLC and thereby obtain effective ownership of the LLC's assets. The Court determined that the Florida statutory provision cited above should not apply to single-member LLC's, even though no distinction is made between single-member LLC's and multiple-member LLC's in the statute.

In light of this Florida Supreme Court case, many business lawyers advised their clients who owned and operated their businesses using single-member LLC's to consider adding one or more additional members to the LLC, converting the LLC into a different type of business entity, such as a limited partnership or limited liability limited partnership, or converting the LLC from a Florida LLC into an LLC in a state whose law is well-settled regarding charging order protection. It is also important to note that the Court's opinion left open the possibility that even creditors of members of multiple-member LLC's might be able to take over the ownership of the member's LLC interest. There clearly was a need for the Florida Legislature to address these important Florida business law issues as soon as possible.

I am pleased to advise that the Florida Legislature did, in fact, act quickly to partially overrule the Olmstead case and to provide guidance to the business community with respect to asset protection for both single-member and multiple-member LLC's. Effective May 31, 2011, Florida Statute §608.433 has been amended to provide as follows:

- 1. The holding in the Olmstead case does not apply to multiple-member LLC's. Rather, a charging order is the sole and exclusive remedy available to a judgment creditor of a member of a multiple-member LLC.
- 2. A charging order is the sole and exclusive remedy available to a judgment creditor of a single-member LLC, unless the judgment creditor establishes to the satisfaction of the court that distributions under a charging order will not satisfy the judgment within a reasonable time. If the judgment creditor successfully makes such a showing, the court may order the sale of the membership interest pursuant to a foreclosure sale.
- 3. The amendment does not limit (a) the rights of a creditor that has been granted a consensual security interest in an LLC membership interest to pursue its creditor's rights, (b) the principles of law and equity which affect fraudulent transfers, or (c) the availability of the equitable principles of alter ego, equitable lien, constructive trust or other equitable principles not inconsistent with the charging order statute.

In light of the new legislation, which confirms that charging order protection is available to members of multiple-member LLC's but is not available in certain circumstances to a member of a single-member LLC, it seems that adding one or more additional members to a single-

Demonstrative Evidence

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Counsel responds, "Oh, no, that's fine." The judge: "Counsel, you may proceed."

Demonstrative evidence which purports to recreate the actual events that are the focus of the trial must be substantially similar to those events. The judge's decision regarding the use of demonstrative evidence is subject to an abuse of discretion standard. The judge must conduct a balancing test under Section 90.403 to determine whether the probative value is outweighed by unfair prejudice. For example, the judge may exclude items that would be difficult to set up or move during trial or which would tend to distract the jury from the proceedings.

In addition, the judge should consider whether the use of the item or exhibit during the testimony of a witness may be misleading or confusing to the jury. Remember the spectacle of O.J. Simpson standing in front of the jury to demonstrate how the glove did not fit? Tests or experiments conducted by a lay witness should be carefully reviewed by the judge due to the risk of a misleading or "staged" demonstration.

Demonstrative evidence may be used in opening statements or closing arguments. However, the exhibit or item should always be shown to opposing counsel in advance. Often times counsel will not object. If counsel does object, ask the judge for permission to use it. Remember, if you show the item or exhibit to the jury without a stipulation or permission of the court, you risk a possible mistrial or other sanctions imposed by the judge.

Demonstrative evidence can make the testimony of a witness "come alive" to ensure the attention of the jury during your trial.

In a future article, we'll discuss the proper method of refreshing the recollection of a witness and the distinction between it and past recollection recorded.

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Asset Protection

continued from page 12

member Florida LLC will often be the most practical approach for business owners who own and operate their businesses using single-member LLC's. It would appear to be very risky for a single-member LLC to rely on the charging order protection set forth in paragraph #2 above. Because the member of a single-member LLC typically controls whether distributions will be made from the LLC, and, therefore, could prevent such distributions from being made to satisfy a charging order within a reasonable time, it is possible that a court could shift the burden of proof from the judgment creditor to the single-member LLC and require the single-member LLC to establish that distributions will be made from the LLC to satisfy the judgment within a reasonable time in order to qualify for charging order protection. Regardless of whether a court places the burden of proof on the judgment creditor or the single-member LLC, a single-member LLC may have a difficult time persuading the court not to order the sale of the membership interest pursuant to a foreclosure sale. If one or more additional members

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are added to a single-member LLC, the charging order protection will be available without the risk of costly and possibly unsuccessful litigation.

An analysis of the alternatives and legal and tax consequences of making changes to a single-member LLC is beyond the scope of this article. A key aspect of such analysis is how important it is to the business owner to protect the assets of the business from the owner's potential creditors. Business owners should consult with their legal and tax advisors to discuss their particular situations in order to make an informed decision on whether to make any changes to their existing LLC's or on how to structure their new business.

Jeff M. Novatt, Esq. is a shareholder and principal of the Naples law firm, Cheffy Passidomo, P.A., and practices in the areas of business transactions, corporate, partnership and tax law. He is admitted to practice law in Florida and California and has been practicing law for 27 years. Mr. Novatt graduated from Duke University with a degree in accounting, obtained his law degree from the University of Florida College of Law and also received a Master of Laws in Taxation from New York University.



Second District Court of Appeal Appreciation Reception & Dinner

Qctober 13, 2011



The Port Royal Club provided a glorious backdrop to another wonderful DCA event. The Collier County Bar Association was delighted to host a panel of judges from the Second DCA including Chief Judge Morris Silberman, Judge Darryl Casanueva, Judge Charles Davis and Judge Edward LaRose. There was an interesting juxtaposition as both new and experienced attorneys were showcased during the event. Two new attorneys, Kyle Kelly and Charles Whittington, had the honor of being sworn in to The Florida Bar by Judge Silberman. It was a touching reminder of why many in the room chose to become attorneys. We were also privileged to present our annual Lion of the Law award to Laird Lile for all of his accomplishments. The award was accepted on his behalf by his wife, Laurie. The rich tradition of this award and the high ideals of its recipients were an inspiration for all.





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