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# WCBA Newsletter

Washington County Bar Association

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March 2011, Page 1 of 4

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## President's Note

by Sharon Brown, WCBA President

I had the honor of serving as a judge for the Classroom Law Project's Mock Trial Regional Competition in Hillsboro on Saturday. Yes, it means giving up some time on a weekend that could have been used in a million other useful ways, but no more important. Each year I am thrilled by the enthusiasm and talent of our youth, the dedication of teachers, coaches and parents, and ultimately remember why I love our legal system with its funny blend of art, science and drama. Big thanks go to Elizabeth Lemoine and Judge Andrew Erwin and Christine Tracy for the work behind the scenes, Richard Moellmer for all those details, the good-natured security staff, the volunteer judges and helpers, and everyone who had a piece of the puzzle. If you missed it, make it next year. The state finals are March 11 and 12 in Portland, and I'm planning on being there too - Liz can give you all the details.

Our March meeting is coming up March 9, with our CLE on Criminal Appellate Developments and the Supreme Court members as our dinner guests. I will try really hard to pronounce all the names right this time (note to self - practice in front of mirror!). I hope to see you then!

Join the WCBA for a CLE and dinner at  
The Spaghetti Factory after the board meeting on  
Wednesday, March 9,  
starting at 5:15 p.m.

The CLE topic is  
**The State of Criminal Law in the Appellate Courts**  
Presented by Jeff Payne,  
Oregon Department of Justice—Appellate Division

See page 3 for details on CLE and dinner registration.



## State of the Court Address - 2011

reported by Rebecca Mehringer

Judge Kirsten Thompson, recently appointed Presiding Judge, Washington County Circuit Court, presented the annual "State of the Court Address" to the Washington County Bar Association at its monthly meeting on January 12.

In her State of the Court Address, Judge Thompson recognized many of her colleagues including previous presiding judges, Judge Thomas Kohl, Gayle Nachtigal and Marco Hernandez. She reported that Judge Kohl stepped down as presiding judge (having served since 2005) as he was elected President of the Circuit Judges Association in October. He remains active with the Adult Drug Court program and is on the general trial rotation. Judge Nachtigal was presiding judge from 1996-2001 and was nationally honored by induction into the National Center for State Court's Warren t Burger Society and appointed to the State Justice Institute by President Obama. Judge Nachtigal is the head of the Criminal team. Finally, Marco Hernandez (presiding judge from 2002-05) was recently appointed to the Federal District Court. He was responsible for the implementation of the mental health court, and had been serving as a judge in Washington County since 1995.

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As to the remaining judges, current assignments are as follows: Judge Butterfield is serving at the Law Enforcement Center and presides over most of the Early Case Resolution (ECR) cases. Judges Kohl, Nachtigal, Letourneau, Price, Upton, Knapp, and Bailey are on the General Trial rotation. Judge Letourneau serves as part of the Civil team, along with Judge Bailey, and helps with Family Law cases, along with Judges Raines, Erwin, Cobb and Fun. Judge Cobb is also the Probate Judge and Judge Fun is the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge. Referee/pro-tem judge Michele Rini also serves in Juvenile Court, along with her duties on the eviction and support enforcement dockets. In addition to the 13 elected judges and referee, the court has 20 pro tem volunteer judges who handle small claims trials and contested FAPA hearings.

Judge Thompson reported that Washington County's population was approximately 537,000 as of a recent census count. In 2010, there were 39,001 case filings in Washington County, of which 52% were civil, 28% criminal, 13% family law, 4% probate/mental health and 3% juvenile. While many cases are resolved by defaults, dismissal and agreements, there was a total of 572 trials, including 220 bench trials and 306 jury trials.

Some of the more interesting stats were that the circuit court employs approximately 105 full-time employees and those employees were responsible for:

- Scanning 838,150 pages of documents. That's the equivalent of 152 miles of paper, if laid end-to-end
- Sending 24,500 emails notices for hearings (saving \$10,290 in postage)
- Entering 813,040 events into JOIN
- Entering 71,788 judgments
- Helping approximately 70,500 people at the information desk
- Helping about 10,340 people at the family law court facilitator's office
- Issuing 5684 warrants
- Writing 104,285 receipts
- Providing court interpreters at the rate of 105 requests per week
- Screening 57,244 people through the security stations.

In looking to the future, Judge Thompson reflected on the challenges the court systems faced with continued budget and resource cuts. She credits the management staff with helping maintain current court services through innovative ways to save money. Some of the thoughts for the future include centralizing some functions and making better use of technology to save money (such as the emailing of notices). A continued concern is access to the court system, which may be remedied through the use of an eCourt system, allowing access to the courts 24/7.

Judge Thompson wants to make sure that the court system remains "committed to staying open and accessible" to the community "and to continue to build on the successes that have been achieved." She cited as of equal importance those successes that are easy to see, i.e., timely case disposition, and those that are hard to quantify, i.e., drug court programs, mediation for small claims, and alternative dispute resolution for family law proceedings. When asked what the Bar can do, she reminded us to "keep in mind our obligations as officers to the court to support the ideals of the rule of law and access to justice in our society" - share your values with your friends and neighbors - remember that everyone is working harder than ever - take a moment to say thanks. And, if you have an idea to help, share it.



### Family Law Bench Bar Committee News

Washington County has started up the Family Law Bench Bar Committee, which has been dormant for several years. Laura Schantz was named the chairperson. The other committee members are Mike Fearl, Kelly Lemarr, Heather Kemper, Paul DeBast, Doug Peterson, David Hobson, Sue Lain, Rebecca Mehringer, Judge Letourneau, Judge Cobb, Judge Raines and Judge Erwin.

The committee met for the first time in December and discussed "What is the Family Law Bench Bar Committee?" The consensus seems to be that the committee is for the purpose of implementing the best practices and procedures for our county. The judges especially want family law practitioners to feel free to contact any one of the attorneys on this committee to express their concerns or ideas about best practices and procedures for the family law team in Washington County.

The next committee meeting will be in March and the topic will be "Best Practices from other Counties." We are hoping that by having this forum, which will meet quarterly to share ideas and concerns, we will help make practicing family law in Washington County the best that it can be.

## Mediation Training Opportunity 40-Hour Basic Mediation Training

Volunteer mediators are needed to assist litigants in Small Claims and Landlord-Tenant (eviction) cases. Our court-connected volunteer mediation program has helped litigants resolve their legal disputes for many years. We are now recruiting new volunteers from our community and offering a 40-hour basic mediation training.

This training will be offered from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. in the **Washington County Courthouse** located in downtown Hillsboro on the following dates:

- Friday, April 1
- Saturday, April 2
- Sunday, April 3
- Saturday, April 16
- Sunday, April 17

**Application Deadline is Friday, March 4, 5 p.m.**

Cost: \$50 (to be collected upon selection to participate in training)

Commitment after training: Mediate Small Claims cases at least one Monday afternoon each month for a year.

For more information about our court-connected volunteer mediation program and this mediation training, contact Washington County Circuit Court Mediation Coordinator Chris Stiefer at 503.846.2354.



### Classified advertising rates:

\$20 for the first 50 or fewer words, and \$.50 per word thereafter. Classified ads must be prepaid. To obtain a quote, send the proposed text to [wcbanews@comcast.net](mailto:wcbanews@comcast.net).

### Display advertising rates:

Business card size (2" x 3.5") \$30  
1/4 page \$50  
1/2 page \$90

Please submit your ad in JPEG format to [wcbanews@comcast.net](mailto:wcbanews@comcast.net)

## WCBA Newsletter, Page 3 of 4

*Have you paid your 2011 WCBA dues?  
September, 2010 -August, 2011 is the WCBA membership year.*

*Dues for 2011 are \$75, and may be paid by contacting Julie Viner, Administrative Assistant, at 503.648.0300.*

### THE WCBA MARCH CLE & DINNER MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2011

CLE 5:15 p.m.

## *The State of Criminal Law in the Appellate Courts*

Presented by Jeff Payne,  
Oregon Department of Justice—Appellate Division

Our dinner guests are the  
Oregon Supreme Court Justices.

Cocktails at 6 p.m.  
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Place: The Old Spaghetti Factory  
18925 NW Tanasbourne Drive  
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

Please send your pre-registration form to:  
Julie Viner, PO Box 912, Hillsboro OR 97123;  
phone 503.648.0300; fax number 503.693.9304;  
or via email to [wcba.association@frontier.com](mailto:wcba.association@frontier.com).  
Please register by March 4 so that we will be able to guarantee space.

DINNER COST \$15 (PLEASE CHOOSE AN ITEM)

### Dinner Reservation

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dinner food choices:

- Spaghetti Sampler \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mizithra cheese, meat, clam & tomato sauces)
- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce \_\_\_\_\_
- Spaghetti with Marinara \_\_\_\_\_
- Spaghetti with Mizithra Cheese \_\_\_\_\_
- Fettuccini Alfredo \_\_\_\_\_
- Baked Chicken with steamed broccoli \_\_\_\_\_

### CLE Reservation

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I will attend the February CLE

Number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_  
\$15 for members, \$25 for non-members.

# WASHINGTON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION 2011 DUES

The WCBA is a local association of lawyers serving Washington County practitioners. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and for local bar members to voice their views on matters of importance to their everyday practice. Consider the benefits of low-cost membership:

You will receive the *WCBA Newsletter*, which keeps you informed (and sometimes entertained) on updated information from Washington County judges, various bar committees, monthly CLE Programs, social dinners and activities, the law library, etc. The newsletter is also an excellent and inexpensive place for advertising and classifieds.

- Discount on monthly CLE programs and materials.
- Discount on monthly dinner meetings with speakers or opportunities to express your views and become informed directly from local practitioners.
- Events and committees for relaxation, networking and socializing with your colleagues.
- Leadership opportunities and community service.

Membership Dues: \$75 per year (September 2010 to August 2011)  
(Note: new members have this fee waived for the first year!)

**Payable to:**                    **Washington County Bar Association**  
 PO Box 912  
 Hillsboro OR 97124  
 Phone: 503.648.0300, Fax:503.693.9304  
 \*You can also pay by credit card with our PayPal account  
 by visiting our website at [www.wcbabar.org](http://www.wcbabar.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OSB #: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Fax/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

One application per attorney, please.

Please return this form\* with your payment to the above address and indicate:

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member      Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewing Member: \_\_\_\_\_