



# CourtNews

An Online Newsletter  
to the Citizens of San Mateo County

San Mateo County  
Superior Court

May 4, 2005

## GET ANSWERS TO YOUR LEGAL QUESTIONS AT COMMUNITY LAW NIGHT ON MAY 19TH

Community Law Night is a free legal information and resource program for the citizens of San Mateo County. At this event, people can attend free informational lectures, get one-on-one attorney consultations and learn about available community resources. Free childcare and Spanish interpreters are also provided.

This is the third Community Law Night that the Court has hosted. This event consists of three components:

- Mini-consultations (15 minutes) with one of 55 volunteer attorneys
- Lectures from volunteer attorneys on "Family Law" and "How to Represent Yourself in Court"
- A legal resource program with 20 government agencies and non-profit organizations

Community Law Night is a collaborative effort of the San Mateo Superior Court, San Mateo County Bar Association, and San Mateo County. The Court is extremely appreciative of the contributions that the Bar Association, volunteer attorneys, and County have made to make this event a success each year.

**Community Law Night is Thursday, May 19th from  
5:30 pm —8:30 pm in the Hall of Justice in Redwood City.**

## THE SUPERIOR COURT AND BAY AREA LEGAL AID PARTNER TO FORM THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC

Victims of domestic violence can now receive assistance with obtaining a temporary restraining order (TRO) at the new TRO Clinic! The clinic, which began operations on March 14<sup>th</sup>, is open four days/week (every day except Tuesday). It is operated by Bay Area Legal Aid (BayLegal) and is staffed by two bilingual attorneys.

Clinic staff conduct daily workshops and offer some individual assistance to help petitioners complete and file required paperwork, understand the court process, understand how to serve papers to the respondent, and to prepare the petitioner for their court hearing.

Grant funding for the clinic was obtained through a partnership of the San Mateo Superior Court, BayLegal and Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA). The Court is working closely with BayLegal to ensure the speedy processing of paperwork. The court also provided used computers for the clinic and San Mateo County provided surplus office furniture.

If you need to contact the clinic for more specific information, their telephone number is 650-701-0850. A map to the Domestic Violence Clinic appears at the end of this newsletter.

Hon. George A. Miram  
Presiding Judge

Hon. Robert D. Foiles  
Assistant Presiding Judge

Hon. Mark R. Forcum  
Chair, Community  
Outreach Committee

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## SCHOOLS COME TO THE SUPERIOR COURT

The San Mateo County Superior Court has recently expanded its program for local schools that tour the courthouse. Presiding Judge George A. Miram, Assistant Presiding Judge Robert D. Foiles and Judge Mark R. Forcum meet and greet the students in the morning. The students then observe a trial, the criminal presiding judge's calendar (where felonies are heard) and the Bridges Drug Treatment Program review calendar.

Judges Miram, Foiles, and Forcum then meet with the students and answer all follow-up questions that the students have. The judges also discuss the court in the schools case study to further illustrate the court process.

In the past few months, St Matthews' entire 8th grade class and Burlingame High School seniors toured the court and sat in on trials. If your school is interested in participating in this program, please contact Judge Mark R. Forcum, Chair of Court Community Outreach at 650-363-7835.



Class tours provide a real life glimpse into the criminal justice system.

## JUROR OUTREACH PROGRAM

As part of the Court's outreach program for jurors, the Court has implemented a number of positive changes that have improved jury duty for the community. Presiding Judge Miram and Assistant Presiding Judge Foiles send a letter to all jurors with their summons that provides helpful information about jury duty and lets people know that they can request a six-month continuance of jury duty to a time that is more convenient.

The Court recently received a letter from a juror about the positive changes that we have implemented in the past three years. Below is a sample of those comments:

"Although I did not serve, I did see that you are doing much to make jury experience tolerable. I was mightily impressed, particularly as follows:

- You have indeed improved the phone-notification service
- In the jury-assembly room, you provided pay phones and Internet computers
- The Judge himself came down and announced that we remaining prospects need not serve
- All this demonstrated that you regard jurors as important. The judge coming himself was beyond the call of duty

We are working hard to make sure your jury service is a positive one. If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve our services to you, please click on [email the webmaster](#) on the Court's website and let us know your ideas.



Jurors can check their status online at [www.sanmateocourt.org](http://www.sanmateocourt.org)



**THANK YOU SAN MATEO COUNTY JURORS  
JUROR APPRECIATION WEEK IS MAY 9—13**

## COURT IN THE SCHOOLS DAY

The Court in the Schools Day Program continues to successfully expand and now occurs twice a year in the San Mateo Union High School District, Sequoia Union High School District and Junipero Serra High School. The program, where judges visit schools and use a real criminal case to teach about the criminal justice system, has received excellent feedback from the faculty, students and judiciary. Here is a sample of what students have recently said about the program:

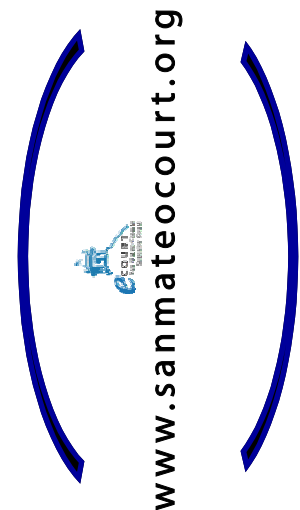
- I honestly believed that this presentation was one of the best presentations our class has ever had... during this presentation, I was able to participate and ask questions that I thought were interesting and important.
- I really enjoyed Judge Forcum and the prosecutor Elaine Tipton. I enjoyed the fact that we had a chance to learn about the judicial system straight from someone who actually works in it. This was far more interesting than learning it from a book.
- After the presentation I feel like I know more about the way the court system works...overall, there was nothing that I didn't like about the presentation.



Judges in the classroom add to the learning experience by sharing real life examples that illustrate the academic material.

This year, our judicial officers went to the following schools as part of Court in the Schools Day:

| School         | Judicial Officer  | School                   | Judicial Officer  |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Aragon         | Judge Clifford V. Cretan  | San Mateo                | Judge Mark R. Forcum, Judge Marie Seth Weiner, and Deputy District Attorney Elaine Tipton |
| Burlingame     | Judge Mark R. Forcum and Deputy District Attorney Elaine Tipton | San Mateo Middle College | Judge Mark R. Forcum  |
| Capuchino      | Judge John W. Runde   | Sequoia                  | Judge Craig L. Parsons  |
| Carlmont       | Judge John L. Grandsaert  | Woodside                 | Judge Craig L. Parsons and Judge Marie Seth Weiner  |
| Junipero Serra | Judge Robert D. Foiles  |                          |   |
| Menlo-Atherton | Judge Joseph E. Bergeron and Judge John L. Grandsaert           |                          |   |
| Mills          | Judge John W. Runde   |                          |   |



## FOR LOCAL SAN MATEO COUNTY STUDENTS - READ THE COURT IN THE SCHOOLS CASE STUDY ONLINE

Read about Fred and Vanessa, the two defendants who are discussed in the real life criminal case study. The case study has details about their criminal history and their current offenses. When you have finished reading about their crimes (yes, this really happened in real life!), answer the questions in the second part. What would you do if you were the judge?

Go to the Court's website, at [www.sanmateocourt.org](http://www.sanmateocourt.org), and click on High School Case Study.



The case study is based on an actual criminal case from San Mateo County.



## BRIDGES PROGRAM UPDATE

The Court’s innovative Bridges Drug and Alcohol Program continues to operate to a high degree of success. Described as one of the finest drug and alcohol programs in the country by criminal law expert, Professor Edwin Latessa, the program has an 80% graduation rate. If you’d like to learn more about the program, please click [here](#) to read a recent San Mateo Daily Journal article about Bridges.



The Bridges Program helps people learn how to live healthy, productive lives.

## THE SUPERIOR COURT WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK

The San Mateo County Superior Court continues to strive to provide the best possible level of service to you, in the most economical way. The programs described above represent the wide variety of ways we are working to serve you.

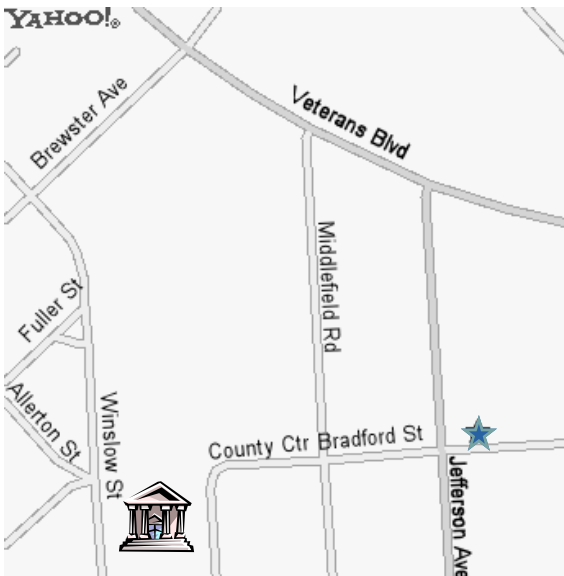
We appreciate the feedback that we have gotten from the public and encourage you to email us with your constructive suggestions and comments. Please click on the Court’s webmaster link to contact us.

Thank you,

George A. Miram  
Presiding Judge

Robert D. Foiles  
Assistant Presiding Judge

Mark R. Forcum  
Chair, Court Community  
Outreach Committee



### Directions to the Domestic Violence Clinic

From the Redwood City Courthouse (see Courthouse graphic at left), take County Center across Middlefield Road (County Center turns into Bradford). The clinic (blue star graphic at left) is located at 707 Bradford (nearest cross street is Jefferson).

