



# San Mateo County Superior Court COURTNEWS

An online newsletter to the San Mateo County Bar Association

June 3, 2005

Hon. George A. Miram  
Presiding Judge

Hon. Robert D. Foiles  
Assistant Presiding Judge

Hon. Mark R. Forcum  
Chair, Court Community  
Outreach Committee

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## New Riese Hearing Procedures

Riese hearings have been in existence for over twenty years. These hearings are vital to protecting the rights of individuals detained pursuant to W&I 5150. Very commendably, attorneys from the San Mateo County Bar Association have handled these hearings since their inception. Recently, the California Supreme Court repealed Canon 6G of the California Code of Judicial Ethics, making attorneys who "practice law" ineligible to serve as hearing officers. This required the Court to revamp its hearing procedures. Presiding Judge Miram, working in conjunction with the Bar Association, John Digiacinto and a statutorily-mandated committee, selected three of the Court's research attorneys to conduct the Riese hearings beginning July 1st. The new hearing officers will be Judy Highlander, Kelly Blunden and Matt Yuen.

The Court would like to sincerely thank the many members of our Bar Association for their conscientious and dedicated contributions serving as hearing officers, including Jeff Boyarsky, Ed Rojas, and Myra Weiher who have most recently conducted the Riese hearings. The Court would also like to recognize and thank the many other lawyers who over the last twenty-three years have helped the Court with this process, including John Digiacinto, Dave Goldstein, Rick Halpern, Dave Levy, Ed Pliska, Jack Fahres, Al Martin, Kingsford Jones, and current Judge Steve Dylina.

## Court Selects New Court Executive Officer

We are happy to announce that the Superior Court has hired John Fitton to serve as the Court's Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Fitton replaces longtime Court Executive Officer Peggy Thompson, who retired in March. Mr. Fitton was selected after a nationwide search to recruit the best possible candidate.

Judge Forcum, who chaired the search selection committee, said, at the time of Mr. Fitton's selection, that the Court was extremely pleased to recruit an individual like Mr. Fitton who has "the leadership skills and vision to ensure the Court continues to operate effectively to serve the citizens of San Mateo County." Mr. Fitton had previously served as one of Ms. Thompson's deputy court administrators in the Municipal Court and as a deputy court executive officer for the Superior Court from 1991 to 1998. Most recently, Mr. Fitton served as Associate Director/Assistant Professor of Student Support Services at Southern Oregon University. Mr. Fitton will commence his new job responsibilities in July. Deputy Court Executive Officer Rodina Catalano has served as Interim Court Executive Officer and will continue in that role until July. The Court is very appreciative of her outstanding service.

# Community Law Night



## A Major Success

The 3rd annual Community Law Night took place on May 19th at the Hall of Justice. The event, a joint collaborative venture between the Bench and Bar and the Board of Supervisors, was a huge success with more than 200 County residents receiving free legal information. The Court would like to thank Bar Association Executive Director, John Digiacinto, Bar President Vivian L. Kral, Bar Services Manager Vicki Robinson and the 60 lawyers who gave their time to help so many San Mateo County residents. The lawyers from the San Mateo County Bar Association who commendably participated this year were:



Frank Gerald Adam  
Deborah Appel  
Haitham E. Ballout  
William A. Bauld  
Jeffery L. Boyarsky  
Martin Brandfon  
Raymond A. Buenaventura  
Patricia A. Burke  
Monica Castillo  
Terry Chun  
Brian Clark  
Christopher E. Cobey  
Paul Constantino  
Margaret A. Copenhagen  
Charles A. Dyer  
Mario Fausto  
Mara W. Feiger  
Sam Ferdows  
Bob Ferris



Chuck Finney  
Alex Lubarsky  
Lori Lutzker  
Eileen Manning-Villar  
Chantel Fitting  
Tracy Gatlin  
Lauren Greenberg  
Patrick Hall  
Rick Halpern  
Jeffrey B. Hayden  
Brigitta Herst  
Melissa M. Holmes  
Chong Hong  
Paul Judge  
Kamin Kamali  
Adam Kent  
Nancy Lara-Moscardini  
Mark Lee  
Cynthia Lemus



James P. McLaughlin  
Sandra McNabb  
Doris Mei  
Abraham Mertens  
Bonnie L. Miller  
Rumei Mistry  
Sally Mitchell  
Lisa Murray  
Joe Nespor  
Jeff Neubarth  
Lisa Novak  
Connie O'Brien  
Tony O'Brien  
Niki Okcu  
David Packard  
Douglas S. Paris  
Valerie L. Patten  
Steve Pisano  
Karolyn Plummer



Sujata Reuter  
Amanda L. Riddle  
Carlos Salinas  
Marc Seidenfeld  
Iraj Shahrak  
Shivadev Shastri  
Peter Shearer  
David Silberman  
Charles Smith  
Kevin A. Taheny  
Elaine Tipton  
David E. Vallerga  
Eva E. Voisin  
Arden Weinberg  
Rand N. White  
Andre Winghart  
Tim Wright  
Jerry Zanzinger  
Chris Zouboulakis

Community Law Night also provides a wide array of information about legal services that exist for the community. In that regard, the Court would also like to thank and recognize District Attorney James P. Fox, Deputy District Attorney Elaine Tipton who oversees the DA's office outreach efforts, Deputy District Attorney Chuck Finney, who handles consumer protection cases, and Grace Nelson, who handles victim impact issues for being part of Community Law Night.

A few of the other organizations present that provided valuable information to the public included BayLegal's Domestic Violence Clinic, Court Appointed Special Advocates, International Institute, La Raza Centro Legal, Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, San Mateo County Probation Department, San Mateo County Law Library, and the Service League of San Mateo County. The Court appreciates the contributions each of these organizations make to help the citizens of San Mateo County.

We'd also like to thank the many people from our Court whose work behind the scenes made Community Law Night a success, particularly our Acting Court Executive Officer Rodina Catalano, Deputy Court Executive Officer Bill Lowell and Community Outreach Coordinator Jill Selvaggio. Many of the Court's employees also volunteered their time and energy. We would like to thank and recognize Helen Alfassa, Miriam Alvarez, Nadine Burg, David Cherniss, Phillip Escudero, Don Franchi, Timothy Gee, Karina McMillan, Nancy Morrison, Steve Osawa, Tammy Papi, Lonny Pini, Monica Rands-Preuss, and Lauren Zorfias for all of their help.

# Court in the Schools Day and Judicial Outreach Efforts



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

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

The San Mateo County Superior Court continues to be very active in the community and judicial officers have visited a number of community service clubs, schools, television and radio stations. Some of these community outreach activities are summarized below:

<b>Judge</b>	<b>Topic/Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
Presiding Judge George A. Miram	Community Law Night	Hall of Justice
	Technology and Courts	Foster City Cable TV
	Innovations in San Mateo Superior Court	Women Lawyers Section
	About the Superior Court	Kiwanis Club
	Leadership Academy	Redwood City Chamber of Commerce
Assistant Presiding Judge Robert D. Foiles	8th Graders from St. Matthews - Courthouse tour and questions/answers	Hall of Justice
	Rules of Court Changes	Women Lawyers Section
	Judge Mark R. Forcum	8th Graders from St. Matthews - Courthouse tour and questions/answers
Community Law Night		Hall of Justice
Innovations in San Mateo Superior Court		Daughters of the American Revolution - Belmont
What You Can Expect if You're Selected as a Juror		Your Legal Rights with Chuck Finney, KALW 91.7
Judge Stephen M. Hall	YMCA - Our Schools Program Mock Trial	Hall of Justice
	What Our Courts Do	2nd Graders at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School
	San Carlos Middle School Mock Trial	Hall of Justice

If you are interested in having a judicial officer come to your service club, law firm or school, please contact the Chair of the Court's Community Outreach Committee, Judge Mark R. Forcum via email at [webmaster@sanmateocourt.org](mailto:webmaster@sanmateocourt.org) or at 650-363-7835.

## New Judicial Assignments



July - December 2005

Presiding Judge George A. Miram has made the following additional assignments for July 2005 - December 2005:

- Criminal Presiding Judge: Mark R. Forcum
- Law and Motion Judge: Carol Mittlesteadt
- Case Management Conference Judge (Tuesdays and Thursdays): Gerald J. Buchwald

Effective July 5, 2005, current Criminal Presiding Judge Stephen M. Hall will rotate back to a general trial assignment and will sit in his courtroom, 2C. Judge Jack Grandsaert will continue in his trial assignment and move into Judge Forcum's courtroom, 2H, for the balance of the year.

Newly appointed Judge Gerald J. Buchwald, who will handle CMCs on Tuesdays and Thursdays will also hear trials in Redwood City. Judge Buchwald will sit in courtroom 7B, phone number 363-4503. As Judge Buchwald will be hearing CMCs, his courtroom will also be equipped with CourtCall.

## E-Delivery Training Update



In February, the Court started a series of trainings on how to use EZLegalFile for members of the Bar. EZLegalFile enables attorneys to file their legal documents electronically. The service is currently available for civil cases, with family law and probate services under development. In partnership with the San Mateo County Bar Association, participants earn two MCLE units for attending the free, two-hour training.

Originally, the Court planned on holding monthly trainings, but due to an overwhelming response, more than 17 trainings were given between February and April! So far, more than 200 attorneys, paralegals and legal staff have attended this excellent training. Feedback has been very positive and helpful to us.

We are proud of this training as it strengthens the wonderful relationship that we have with the Bar and allows us to share this excellent service with the legal community. If you are interested in attending a training, please email [ezlegalfile@sanmateocourt.org](mailto:ezlegalfile@sanmateocourt.org) or call Lonny Pini at 650-363-4188.



## Court Meets with the Judicial Council



On May 12th, eleven members of the Judicial Council and Administrative Office of the Courts met with Presiding Judge George A. Miram and Assistant Presiding Judge Robert D. Foiles to discuss a number of issues confronting the courts. The discussion continued at lunch with Judges Joseph E. Bergeron, Beth L. Freeman, Mark R. Forcum, Stephen M. Hall, John W. Runde, Marie S. Weiner, and Commissioner Sue Greenberg also joining in the meeting.

Our Court demonstrated the EZLegalFile system, now with e-delivery, the Court's website with online newsletters, and our Court in the Schools Day Program's online interactive case exercise for the Judicial Council and AOC representatives.

The meeting was a very positive one, as it enhances our ability to communicate with the growing Administrative Office of the Courts, while at the same time demonstrating our local innovative and collaborative Bench-Bar programs. We'd like to specifically thank Chief Probation Officer Loren Buddress for his help in arranging the tour of the Bridges Program, where our visitors met with probation staff and Bridges participants. The tour included an observation of the cognitive training component of Bridges, which has been vital to the success of the program. The Court also gave the visiting officials a tour of the Court's facilities and the new Domestic Violence Restraining Order Clinic.

## Conclusion



Our Court is very appreciative of the long-standing, positive relationship that we have with the outstanding Bar Association leadership and its members. As always, we encourage your ideas on how we can improve. Feel free to email the webmaster with any ideas or suggestions that you may have and it will be promptly forwarded to us or feel free to call any of us at the phone numbers below. Thanks again and have a great summer.

Thank you,

George A. Miram  
Presiding Judge  
650-363-4511

Robert D. Foiles  
Assistant Presiding Judge  
650-363-4813

Mark R. Forcum  
Chair, Court Community  
Outreach Committee  
650-363-7835

