

DISTRICT/MUNICIPAL COURT LIAISON COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

On May 25, 2017 the committee had its regularly scheduled bi-monthly meeting.

Judge Verhey gave congratulations to Michelle Petrich, Court Administrator for the City of Tacoma Municipal Court for her recent graduation from St. Martin's College with a degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology. An interesting historical note, Judge Verhey, was the original creator and first chairperson of the District/Municipal Court Liaison Committee. The committee looks forward to continuing the work started by Judge Verhey well into the future.

This City of Tacoma has a new City Manager, Elizabeth Pauli, the former City Attorney and Interim City Manager. The new City Attorney is Bill Fosbre, who is coming from his position with the Tacoma Public Utilities. Congratulations, to both with wishes for continued success in their new positions.

The Center for Dialog and Resolution has a new location. They are now located at 717 Tacoma Ave. So. Tacoma, WA 98402. Jennifer Unger, Associate Director of the Center for Dialog and Resolution, recounted the Center's Open House which took place on May 18, 2017. It was a fun filled adventure in Fairy Tale Role Playing. This proved to be an easy and fun way for the community to better understand the role of mediators. Roles included the 3 Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf for Landlord-Tenant disputes. The Seven Dwarves and Snow White for Workplace issues. Peter Rabbit and Mr. MacGreggor (his garden) for Neighborhood Disputes.

There is an increasing need for Volunteer Mediators during the summer months. If you are able to volunteer, please let the Center know. There will be Settlement Conference training August 10, 2017, please contact the Center or go to their website for additional information.

Kimberly Cox, Assistant City Attorney for the City of Lakewood reported that as a result of a DUI emphasis patrol there are currently somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 cases pending in the jurisdictions of Ruston, Milton, Dupont, Lakewood, Puyallup and Pierce County District Court in which Lakewood Police Officers drew blood to be used as evidence. So far there have been no legal challenges. The Lakewood Police Officers are trained in accordance with the statutory requirements for phlebotomists. The processes and procedures utilized by these officers has been certified by the Department of Health. There is always two Officers in the room during the blood draw and the procedure is audio and visually recorded with no anticipated expiration date. The Officers off-site supervision is provided by the West Pierce Fire District and their Medical Supervision is provided by Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup.

The Lakewood Municipal Court has launched its effort to become paperless. The Lakewood City Prosecutor's Office is also attempting to go paperless, but has not launched quite yet.

The Tacoma Municipal Court is also looking toward going paperless. They are in the investigatory phase right now. They have visited the Renton court and reviewed their paperless system. They also plan to meet with various vendors and visit other courts prior to making a decision on what paperless system they will be utilizing in the future.

Erica Nohavec, Pierce County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, indicated that the DART program is doing well. District Court Judge Margaret Ross' department handles the DART cases. The number of cases being processed under the program continues to grow.

The committee was honored by the attendance of the President of the Tacoma Pierce County Bar Association, Diane Clarkson. President Clarkson thanked the committee for its work and expressed appreciation for the dialog generated and the impact the committee had on the community.

President Clarkson let the committee know that the Tacoma Pierce County Bar Association will be sponsoring a Talent show in October of this year. Although, no firm date has been picked yet, she encouraged would be participants to start getting their acts ready. The Talent show will contain comedy, dancing, singing, and music. It sounds like a good time will be had by all.

President Clarkson also gave an update on the Volunteer Legal Services (VLS) recent request for additional funds to accommodate their growth and expansion. VLS is a program that is a part of the Tacoma Pierce County Bar Association.

The representative from 2Watch (EHM) reported testing a new GPS system. They call it the buddy bracelet. It is smaller than usual device with a longer battery life. 2Watch is currently looking to open new locations possibly in Marysville, Redmond or the Hoquiam/Aberdeen area. There may be legislation creating more regulation on EHM providers. House Bill 1943 as it stands now would require Washington State Patrol background check, 24 hour notice to court regarding violations and enforcement mechanisms for EHM providers who do not comply. One possible penalty may be removal from the provider list approved for use by the courts.

The District/Municipal Court Liaison Committee will take its summer recess and the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2017, 7:30 AM at the Harvester Restaurant located at 29 N Tacoma Avenue. All are welcome.