

Judiciary Times

Spring 2007

The newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary

Winner of Astra Awards for Newsletter Writing from the N.J. Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association

N.J. Judiciary's Employee Exchange Program Builds Networks and Fosters Understanding

The building map posted beside the courthouse elevator door said it all.

One arrow pointed up. Another pointed down. A third pointed around a corner and a fourth reared back to "You are here!"

Twisting his head to follow the map, the visiting Judiciary manager finally surrendered to the moment and got on the elevator with a friendly smile. Wherever he wound up, it was going to be an interesting day!

It's that element of "expect the unexpected" that makes the Judiciary's new Employee Exchange Program a welcome change of pace for managers and supervisors. Many staff have been so busy doing good work in their

own vicinage or office that they haven't had a chance to see the courts at work in other parts of the state.

Now being piloted in Burlington, Camden and Morris/Sussex Vicinages and the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Employee Exchange Program hopes to change all that. And according to initial reports, it's already doing a great job.

"I think that the exchange program is an excellent idea," said Karen June, manager of volunteer services programs in the central office. June visited the Burlington Vicinage this winter. "I really appreciated the a-la-carte options for our personal itineraries, which allowed me to

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Probation Division Tests Wireless Technology

by Probation Staff
Administrative Office of the Courts

A probation client, who is delinquent in paying court-ordered fines, walks into a hearing room.

He tells the hearing officer that yesterday afternoon, he paid half of the amount owed. How can the hearing officer find out whether or not this is the case?

Until recently, such a situation could have resulted in delays or even a rescheduled hearing. But no more.

Thanks to wireless equipment currently being piloted by probation staff, the hearing officer is able to access the database to confirm this information immediately and set an appropriate payment plan without rescheduling the hearing. Because of this wireless access, the noticing, phone call contacts and preparation of paperwork for another hearing have been avoided.

This pilot uses the Dell "Tablet," a lightweight, wireless laptop. This device allows probation staff to complete computer-related duties while out of the office. Many probation functions are performed while "in the field," away from desktop computers and landline connections that provide wired access to databases and e-mail features, an essential part of doing business. In Atlantic, Burlington and Hudson Counties, probation officers performing home or school visits now can use the Tablet to enter casebook notes and check e-mail while sitting in their cars.

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Wireless Works--Thomas Parker, Atlantic County senior probation officer, enters data in his car while doing field work. He is a participant in the Probation Division wireless pilot.

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Juvenile Unit of Probation Services Takes Action To Deal with Cases Involving Sexually Abusive Behavior

by Gayle Maher
Chief of Juvenile Probation Services
Mary McGinty Flanagan
Administrative Special 4

Approximately 600 juvenile probationers receive specialized supervision for sexually abusive behavior (SAB). SAB, with the focus on identifying problem behavior, applies to juveniles who either have a sex offense charge or who are identified as in need of enhanced supervision. As Gayle Maher, chief of Juvenile Probation Services, explains, "The terminology allows

Probation to properly identify clients needing supervision by specially trained probation officers."

The probation officers who supervise these clients face some unique challenges, such as the complex interaction of normal developmental changes on delinquent behavior. Probation officers and staff in the Juvenile Unit of Probation Services have taken action to improve the processing of these cases by forming a committee to address the supervision of these juveniles. The committee already has a number of significant achievements to its credit.

Judge Cornelius Sullivan (retired, serving on recall in Burlington) is a member of this committee. As a result of his experience in Burlington County's Family Division, Judge Sullivan is aware of the special supervision needs of this population, and thus the need for probation officers to receive additional training.

"Probation officers working with this population must have the diplomatic skills to be confrontational enough to break through the denial of the clients and their families and yet be supportive enough not to permanently alienate either clients or their parents," Judge Sullivan said.

"I believe the courts have been wise to assign an exceptionally talented group of probation officers to work with these special clients and families," he added.

Judge Sullivan's ongoing involvement with this committee provides members with a view from the bench on every issue that is addressed. This is a significant contribution to the professional development of staff.

Through the Training Officers in Probation Supervision (TOPS) courses, Probation Services offers multi-leveled training opportunities for staff, including those supervising these clients. The committee dealing with these issues—a sub-committee of the juvenile probation managers

group—meets three times each year and provides a small-group training environment for juvenile probation officers.

Each meeting is an all-day activity, with an outside trainer in the morning presenting on a topic suggested by the committee, and a case-presentation format in the afternoon led by a probation officer experienced with these clients. The afternoon session allows for officers from throughout the state to hear how their peers handle these supervision issues and what services are available in other counties.

Since meeting for the first time in May 2006, the committee has identified and achieved a number of goals. Three of the most significant achievements are:

- Creation of a directory of treatment providers that identifies specialized evaluators and counselors for these probationers.
- An update on Megan's Law by Dana Petrone, an attorney with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office.
- The initiation of a collaborative partnership with Jennifer Kelly, a professional in the field of juvenile sexual abuse counseling. As the result of this partnership, Probations Services staff are learning to identify the critical components of a specialized evaluation and treatment plan and to expand information sharing between the probation officer and the therapist.

Dr. Kelly, a member of the committee, is a private practitioner in Haddonfield specializing in the evaluation and treatment of juveniles with sexually abusive behavior and their families. She is a member of the Association for the Treatment of Sex Abusers (ATSA), the national organization of professionals in this

Judiciary Times is prepared by the Office of Communications, the Administrative Office of the Courts, for employees of the Judiciary and volunteers who work with the court system.

The chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is James R. Zazzali. The acting administrative director of the courts is Judge Philip S. Carchman.

Please e-mail short news articles saved as Word documents in plain text without formatting, as well as photos and/or suggestions to: Linda.Holt@judiciary.state.nj.us or send disk, photos and paper copy to: Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Communications, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Burlington Vicinage: A Value-Driven Venue

by Donna Mazzanti,
Administrative Specialist 4
Deborah Edwards, Court Executive 1B
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Burlington Vicinage

The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate. -- Joseph Priestly, 1733–1804, pioneering chemist

In an age of e-mail and indirect communication, the Burlington Vicinage's executive team, Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney and Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore, recently hosted a series of town meetings for all vicinage employees. These town meetings offered an interactive forum to share important information that would affect each member of the vicinage. While technology can facilitate communication, only the richness of face-to-face communication can truly accomplish the goal of delivering the same message to each member of the organization in the same manner, eliminating any chance for miscommunication.

The focus of the town meetings was to announce the vicinage's newly defined value statement. Judge Sweeney stated, "The way to change our vicinage's ability to achieve long-term success is to change our culture. Values are principles that people choose to live by. Values never change, even during times of crisis. They will align our vicinage to move in one direction and guide all our actions."

The evolution of the vicinage value statement was presented. The process began in April 2005 at the first planning day attended by judges and managers. Organizational values were identified at the conclusion of the day's agenda through exercises and discussions. In February 2006, a series of focus group sessions were held to garner input from a vertical cross-section of vicinage employees.

The focus groups went through the same exercises to identify individual and vicinage values. In March

2006, the first on-line method of voting was held to identify Burlington Vicinage values. Central office staff, Toni McLaughlin, assistant director of communications, and Angela Watson, manager of automated forms, assisted with this initiative.

With our vicinage values defined, Judge Sweeney and TCA Del Preore drafted the vicinage's value statement that incorporated the Judiciary's four values of independence, integrity, fairness and quality service with our newly defined values of knowledge, communication and teamwork. Finally, in April 2006, the draft value statement was the topic of the vicinage's second planning day during which judges and managers had the opportunity to refine this draft statement into one that they felt the entire vicinage could embrace and support.

Jude spoke about the three-step process of implementing the value statement:

Step 1: Learning. He stated that although the process of reaching the point where the value statement was announced at the town meetings was a long journey, the real journey to acquire knowledge begins and continues after the town meetings.

Step 2: Applying. Now we begin defining practical applications and specific actions for our values. Jude provided examples of how the vicinage can maintain focus on the value statement such as hiring practices; decision-making processes, including budgets; setting priorities; identifying initiatives and goals. Ultimately the values will become part of individual and collective performance advisories.

Step 3: Taking Ownership. Each member of the vicinage was encouraged to support the value statement by bringing the words to life and not just tacking it on the wall so that our vicinage can move forward, aligned in purpose, and our future will be defined by the actions we take each day.

To emphasize that the vicinage has achieved many notable successes, vicinage accomplishments were celebrated and to point up that much more can be achieved, future initiatives were shared with everyone in attendance. The session was closed by reciting a quote by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), "One alone is nothing." In unity of purpose, direction and values, there is strength. "Today we begin our journey, one step, one action at a time," said Del Preore. "Together, we will shape our future."

The first step the vicinage will undertake to support applying specific actions associated with the value statement is a course developed by the EEO/AA officer titled, *Dignity and Respect*, which will be mandatory for all vicinage employees and judges. *Dignity and Respect* training will focus on two of the vicinages seven values, fairness and integrity. The program will emphasize the need to treat all court users and co-workers with courtesy and respect. The program also will focus on the need to ensure that the justice we deliver is equitable and accessible to all.

To support another practical application of values, the ombudsman, spoke about customer service. The key message was that customer service in the courts is critical to the public we serve because the information we provide about our court services, policies and procedures may be the only assistance court users receive. To further Burlington's goal of increased customer satisfaction, the Quality Service Committee was created to bring management and staff together to focus on ways to improve customer service in the vicinage.

The spirit of town meetings was further captured through an interactive question and answer session with the assignment judge, trial court administrator and division managers. Vicinage employees took full advantage of the opportunity to openly address a wide variety of topics of interest and areas of concern which

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Child Support Conference Award Winners for 2006

The following awards were presented at the New Jersey Child Support Conference on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1:

Supervisor of the Year

Family-Laverne Harvey, Middlesex
Probation-Bruce Scott, Hudson
Welfare-Maureen McGloshen, Burlington

Worker of the Year

Family-Rose Olivo, Camden
Probation-Deborah Kier, Gloucester
Welfare-Eileen Fraser, Monmouth

County of the Year

Monmouth

The Child Support Conference is an annual event for representatives of the Judiciary's Family, Finance and Probation Divisions as well as the Department of Human Services and local welfare offices. The conference executive board, which plans the conference and serves as an interdisciplinary problem-solving team, selects the winner each year.

Family Division's Laverne Harvey Honored at Conference

by Charles C. Hager
Family Division Manager
Middlesex Vicinage



Laverne Harvey

Laverne Harvey, court services supervisor 2 in the Family Division, Middlesex Vicinage, was honored as the Best Supervisor of the Year for 2006 at the New Jersey Child Support Conference Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

In order to be selected, a nominated supervisor must have implemented innovative programs, be cooperative with other agencies, demonstrate leadership and good management techniques, establish and attain goals set forth by management, and provide excellent customer service.

Harvey excels in all of these areas. She provides excellent customer service, supports and attains goals set by management, and demonstrates leadership and managerial qualities. She is cooperative with outside agencies, has implemented innovative programs and has led her team and the Middlesex Vicinage in preparation for the federal audit.

Her leadership has resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of newly established child support orders set up for collection within 10 days. In some months, this percentage has reached 100 percent.

Harvey has led her team consistently to get modification orders (amendments to existing court orders) on the system in a timely manner. In only a few months, she more than doubled the percentage of orders that are entered into the Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES) within five business days.

Laverne Harvey has a wealth of knowledge in the child support area and has been a "go-to" person for colleagues for a number of years. She has been part of the transition team for ACSES re-engineering and has been an

active participant in surveys for NJ Kids, the joint Executive/Judiciary effort to reform the computerized tracking of child support.

Harvey has worked hard to serve our internal and external customers. In non-dissolution cases, the Middlesex Vicinage, at the end of the court year, had the lowest backlog per hundred filings in New Jersey.

Harvey began her employment with the New Jersey Judiciary as a probation officer in September 1993. She was promoted to court services supervisor 2 in May 2000.

We are very pleased that the Supervisor of the Year 2006 is a member of our vicinage – Laverne Harvey.

Kier and Olivo Receive Worker of the Year Honors for Probation and Family Divisions

Rose Olivo, a Camden Family Division Judiciary clerk 4, received the Worker of the Year—Family award from the New Jersey Child Support Council. She has worked with the Family division for 15 years and has expertise in the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA).

According to the award document, she "demonstrates hard work, integrity and a keen knowledge of child support issues, particularly matters dealing with interstate." The award document praised Olivo for being a "professional at all times...committed to providing excellent customer service."

Deborah Kier, a Cumberland County senior probation officer, received the Worker of the Year—Probation award. She has worked in child support for nearly six years. She was cited for her diligence and accuracy and dedication to upgrading her skills through training.

"Her strong work ethic has increased collections while decreasing paperwork and customer complaints," the award document states, adding that she "recognizes the importance...of the organization and regularly makes herself available to co-workers and supervisors and collaborates regularly with the other various child support agencies."

Child Support Council Names Monmouth County of the Year

On Feb. 1, the New Jersey Child Support Council presented the 2006 County of the Year Award to the Monmouth Vicinage at the 25th Annual Conference in Atlantic City.

The award recognized the ongoing inter-agency cooperation between the court divisions and county agencies dedicated to improved processing and collection of child support in Monmouth County. This partnership team includes the Family Division, the Child Support Enforcement Unit of the Probation Division, the Finance Division, the Information Technology Division, the Monmouth County Sheriff's Department, the Monmouth Division of Social Services and the Child Support Hearing Officers.

Some of the projects that brought Monmouth to the attention of the Child Support Council were the implementation of support enforcement hearings by teleconference, the use of electronic template support orders to increase efficiency within the courtroom as well as reduce data entry time after the hearing. In addition, customer service units were established within Family Reception and the Child Support Enforcement Unit to provide education regarding the child support process, supply information and answer questions that our clients may have following the child support hearing.

Frank A. Cirillo, president of the New Jersey Child Support Council, presented the award. Family Division Presiding Judge Paul A. Kapalko accepted the award on behalf of the vicinage and addressed the more than 900 conference participants.

The Monmouth Probation Child Support staff in attendance were Vicinage Chief Probation Officer Bonnie Kennedy-Sinacore; Assistant Chief Probation Officer Richelle Coleman; and Viquir Anwar, Melissa Fluhr, Frances Giacone, Susan Giresi, Nancy Herman, Melissa Huber, Elizabeth Klotzbach, Rona Martucci, Maribeth Rothberg, Regina Shinn and Dorothy Taylor. Representing the Family Division were Division Manager Lori Cooper, Assistant Division Managers Jane Wiegartner and Rose Marinan-Gabriel, John Morton, Kelly Long, Loretta Toronto, Geraldine Jones, Barbara Theis, Judy Stovekin and Jack Burke as well as Kathy Moody, Finance Division manager, and Dennis Gardell.

Also attending the award presentation were Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson, Trial Court Administrator Marsi L. Perkins, Monmouth County Division of Social Services Acting Director John Hutcheson, Chief Thomas Reiff and Lt. Steve Ellis from the Monmouth County Sheriff's Department.

TCA Perkins said she is proud of the commitment and dedication of each individual partnership member who has helped to improve the lives of many of the children in Monmouth County.

(The following staff contributed to this article: Lori Cooper, Family Division manager; Jane Wiegartner, assistant Family Division manager; Rosemarie Marinan-Gabriels, assistant Family Division manager; Richelle Coleman, vicinage assistant chief probation officer.)

Hudson's Bruce Scott Named Probation Supervisor of the Year

Bruce Scott, court services supervisor 2 in the Hudson Vicinage Probation Division, was honored as Supervisor of the Year—Probation.

Scott's career with the Judiciary began in 1978. Joining the child support program in 1979, he moved through the ranks as investigator, probation officer, senior and then principal probation officer (now known as court services supervisor 2).

According to the award document, he is involved in "all aspects of child support, including assuming responsibility for monitoring the introduction and utilization of the new enforcement tools that have been implemented."

These include judgment coordination, tax offset, Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM), credit reporting and passport denial.

Scott was cited for his commitment to providing quality customer service. He developed a customer service team and saw that staff in the unit received appropriate training. This local customer service unit processed more than 50,000 requests in 2006, the award document stated.

Scott was also praised for his commitment to and focus on New Jersey children, and for his work with clients, members of the bar, the courts and state staff.

Job Shadow Day a Success in the Bergen Vicinage

Feb. 2--Groundhog Day--was celebrated at the Bergen Vicinage this year as Job Shadow Day. The goal of the program is to help young people explore first-hand the education needed to succeed in today's job market. Job shadowing gives students new perspectives on their career goals by showing them a number of choices they have in planning for their future.

River Dell Regional High School contacted Vicinage Volunteer Coordinator Nola Steele regarding participation in their job shadowing program. School personnel asked if

they could place two of their students who had expressed interest in careers with the legal system. Steele planned a schedule of events for these students, including a tour of the historical rotunda building and shadowing Superior Court Judge Donald R. Venezia and Trial Court Administrator Jon Goodman. So even though the vicinage saw "two shadows" following staff on Groundhog Day, which may have suggested six more weeks of winter, it also signified an early spring of knowledge in the lives of two local students.

--Laura A. Simoldoni

Bergen Vicinage Celebrates Black History Month

by Laura A. Simoldoni
Human Resources Manager
Bergen Vicinage

The Bergen Vicinage celebrated Black History Month this February with an art exhibit and a lecture.

"We are Linked...Each to the Other," an exhibit of charcoal drawings by high school freshmen, was displayed in the jury room during the entire month. The exhibition was arranged by Cathy Mirra from the Bergen County Youth Services Commission, who observed the completion of the drawings during a tour of the Bergen Academies High School in Hackensack.

On Feb. 28, the Bergen Vicinage sponsored a lecture titled, "African Americans in the Mid-19th Century to the Mid-20th Century, Bergen County." Arnold E. Brown of the Bergen County Historical Society discussed the history of Pomander Walk Cemetery, Gethsemane Cemetery, the life of Elizabeth Dulfer, a successful business woman who was born a slave,

and African Americans from Bergen County who served in the Civil War.

Pomander Walk Cemetery is located in Teaneck, adjacent to the Hackensack River. The cemetery property is only 76 by 200 feet. This parcel of land was originally part of a 125-acre farm that was owned by the Zabriskie Family. Historians believe that the cemetery has been in existence since the early 1700s and that American Indians, former slaves and Dutch settlers are buried at the cemetery. One famous Native American believed buried there is Lenape Chief Oratam.

The City of Teaneck's tax records indicate that the cemetery was in existence until 1959. In 1960 a developer purchased the farm property including the cemetery. Today the cemetery is surrounded by a retirement home, single family homes and a leaf-transfer station. In 2004, the cemetery property was sold to a doctor who intended to build a single-family home at the site. A retired nurse from Teaneck organized residents and

campaigns to preserve this historical parcel of land. These residents, along with the assistance of historical preservation entities, local, county and state government, purchased the property from the private owner, and the land will remain as open space.

Gethsemane Cemetery is located on Summit Place in Little Ferry. On Nov. 17, 1860, John J. Demarest, Garret Meyers and Simeon Zabriskie, three prominent residents of Hackensack, purchased a one-acre parcel of farmland from John Baptiste Marshall for \$175. The deed stated that the land would be used as "a cemetery or burial ground for the colored population of the Village of Hackensack." In 1901 ownership of the cemetery was transferred to seven African American trustees and incorporated as Gethsemane Cemetery.

Gethsemane Cemetery received notoriety in 1884. On Jan. 22, 1884, Samuel Bass, a sexton at Hackensack's First Baptist Church, passed away, and his family wished him to be buried at a Hackensack Cemetery. Because he was African-American the request was denied, and he was buried at Gethsemane Cemetery. Because of this dispute, in March 1884 the "Negro Burial Bill" was passed by the New Jersey Legislature which made burial discrimination illegal.

Records indicate approximately 500 persons are buried at the cemetery, including Elizabeth Dulfer and two Civil War veterans, Peter Billings and Silas M. Carpenter. Born a slave in 1790, Dulfer was freed in 1822. By the time she passed away on Feb. 12, 1880, at the age of 90, she was one of the area's largest landowners and a prominent businesswoman.

In 1994 the cemetery was added to the New Jersey and national registers of historical places. On Sundays, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. during the months of May and June, visitors may call upon Arnold E. Brown at Gethsemane Cemetery, where he provides historical walking tours of the property.



Appellate Division Black History Observance—The Appellate Division in the central office celebrated Black History Month this year with a quiz about African-American heroes and a luncheon arranged by staff volunteers. Committee members shown above are: (left to right, front row) Carol Fralin, chairperson; Jacqueline Manning and Francine Charles; (second row) Norma Carmichael, Denise Tribble (decoration coordinator), Carmen Pace and Charlotte Earley. Members not shown are Kimberly Cousart, Mattie Robinson and Eshana Kollie. (Photo by S. Parrey)

“Greensboro Four” Sit-In Leader Reflects on Civil Rights Then and Now

by Alyssa Passeggio
Special Writer
Office of Communications

Judiciary employees and members of the public gathered at the R.J. Hughes Justice Complex on Feb. 13 to remember important people and events in black history. Retired Air Force Reserve Maj. Gen. Joseph McNeil, the guest speaker, shared his thoughts on significant events in the Civil Rights Movement, specifically the



Maj. Gen. Joseph McNeil, Ret.

Greensboro sit-ins, as well as issues of respect today. He was joined by soloists who performed spirituals.

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali declared, “We celebrate Black History Month, not because our fight for racial equality has been won. This dialogue, this conversation, is simply a halftime speech. It is not a victory celebration, at least not yet.” Chief Justice Zazzali introduced Maj. Gen. McNeil as “an icon of the Civil Rights Movement” and “a hero of our times.”

As freshmen at North Carolina A&T College, Maj. Gen. McNeil and three of his friends requested service at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C. After being refused service, the four students remained at the counter for the remaining hours of business. The four returned the next day with more friends to resume their sit-in. Bobby E. Battle, chief of the Judiciary Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Program,

was among the students to join the original four during the sit-in movement.

The media coverage of their peaceful protest inspired students around the nation. Students in the south organized sit-ins for other sites of segregation, while students in the north picketed the northern locations of those corporations.

Maj. Gen. McNeil explained that, to him and his friends, the sit-ins were an affirmation of their humanity—that they needed to stand up and be counted.

Born in Wilmington, N.C., Maj. Gen. McNeil graduated from Wil- liston Senior High School and earned a degree in engineering physics from North Carolina A&T in 1963. Involved in both the Vietnam War and the Gulf War, Maj. Gen. McNeil served more than 37 years in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and 15 years in the Senior Executive Service of the Federal Aviation Administration in Jamaica, N.Y.

Maj. Gen. McNeil also included his thoughts on a time line of important events of the Civil Rights Movement. He touched upon events such as the Dred Scott case, Brown v. The Board of Education, and the



Doreleena Sammons-Posey

Civil Rights Act. Maj. Gen. McNeil also shared his thoughts on our nation today: “We believe in the dignity of man....This is our watch, we all need to speak up, all of us as Americans... These are American issues. If we don’t take on some of this stuff now, when will we do it?”

Musical selections were presented by Vincent Wallace, a student at Westminster College of Rider University, and Doreleena Sammons-Posey, the director of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Services at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services. Sammons-Posey further educated the audience by explain-

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A standing-room-only crowd attended the event at the Hughes Justice Complex.

N.J. Judiciary's Employee Exchange Program

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focus on specific areas of interest. Everyone I encountered was aware of the program and its purpose. They were very welcoming and supportive, so important when one is in a new, unfamiliar environment."

A pilot Employee Exchange Program was launched late last year to provide participants and their supervisors with hands-on experiences to help them broaden perspectives, expand contacts and learn new skills. According to the program objectives, employee exchange helps supervisory staff gain new knowledge and net-

working opportunities, while strengthening communication and developing a more flexible, knowledgeable staff throughout New Jersey's courts.

One of the pleasant outcomes of the exchange program is getting to meet staff previously known only online or by phone.

"Not only did it give me a better understanding of the processes that originate out of the AOC and filter their way out to the vicinages, but it also gave me the chance to meet staff I work with every day but seldom meet in person," said Michael Lasko, Morris/Sussex Vicinage assistant

chief probation officer. Lasko met with Family and Criminal leadership in the central office over a two-day period. "I was included in the mix all day long and found both days to be a rewarding experience," he said.

While some staff used the exchange process to learn more about their area of expertise, others focused on expanding their knowledge of other aspects of the Judiciary.

"I had selected the Office of Communications because I wanted something completely different than what I do every day," reflected JoAnne Smith, Burlington's Civil Division manager. "Being with Winnie Comfort (director of communications) and her staff exceeded my every expectation. I thoroughly enjoyed their overview of the unit's responsibility to the Judiciary and how deeply they believe that by doing the right thing, they can make a difference every day."

The exchange pilot is now being evaluated to determine what course it will take in the future as a component of the Judiciary's communication and management development programs.

--Linda Brown Holt

Vicinage View--
Janet Todd, as-
sistant Family
Division manager,
discusses a project
with Employee
Exchange guest,
Kathleen Gaskill,
CDR manager in
the central office.
(Photo by L. Holt)



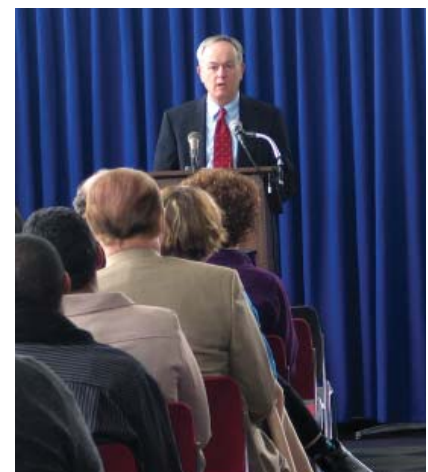
Civil Rights Then and Now

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Rights Movement and two informing the significance in the verses she sang; songs were once used to transfer vital information to slaves trying

escape through the Underground Railroad. Sammons-Posey also invited the audience to sing along with the final figures' contributions varied greatly, song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," including music, writing, politics and the military. One individual, can anthem.

In addition to this gathering, there was also a Black History Month display on the first floor of the R.J. Hughes Complex. The display contained a time line of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and two informational binders containing historical facts and timelines. The display also memorialized inspirational African-American figures who passed away in 2006. The figures' contributions varied greatly, including music, writing, politics and the military. One individual, Arthur Winston, inspired others in his daily life; Winston was named the "Employee of the Century" by former President Bill Clinton for his 76-year dedication to his job with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transport Authority.



Chief Justice James R. Zazzali speaks during the central office Black History presentation.

Central Office Staff in the Burlington Vicinage**An Employee's-Eye View of the Judiciary's Exchange Program**

Mrs. Morgan, the defendant, and Mr. Monroe, the plaintiff, sat tensely at the little round table in the mediation breakout room in late February. Mrs. Morgan was in her 60s, dressed to the nines and looked as though her dignity had just been offended.

Young Mr. Monroe, a natty dresser himself, but with the wary look of a seasoned collection agent, shifted back in his seat, his eyes narrowing with interest, as though expecting a familiar tale of woe.

"Mr. Monroe, would you take half of the amount if I write you a check in the next month?" Mrs. Morgan asked.

"Sure," said the plaintiff. "Can I rely on you to do this by April 1?"

"Yes, I can do that," she said, brightening. The two former adversaries continued their discussion in a cordial and friendly manner, and Farkas wrote out an agreement for them to sign.

Larry Pinkus, court services officer, Appellate Division.

One of the highlights of our visit was a morning overview of the vicinage with Jude Del Preore, trial court administrator. The TCA met informally with us in his seventh-floor office with a sweeping view of downtown Mount Holly, the county seat. Del Preore said the vicinage has 350 staff across nine divisions. The vicinage has four facilities in Mount Holly: the main courts facility, a building that Civil shares with county offices, a building that houses Probation and other services, and the historic "Olde Courthouse," dating to 1795.

After we adjourned to a nearby conference room in the New Courts Facility, Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney joined us to describe his work and answer our questions.

We were surprised to learn that about two-thirds of his work is legal—prerogative writs, appeals from municipal boards, all public bid cases—and one-third is administrative. The assignment judge is regarded as a peer, not a superior, among other Superior Court judges in these matters, he said.

"Jude and I meet almost daily," he noted, and sometimes they are on the phone with each other before dawn. "We started today with a weather decision at 6 a.m.," he recalled. Judge Sweeney said he actually goes outside and drives around before making a decision about a delayed opening or closing due to inclement weather. Other activities of the day followed quickly. "We swore in a new judge at 8:30. After the swearing in, I got a letter from a senator concerning a matrimonial case involving one of his constituents." The judge acknowledged that he takes stacks of work home so he can concentrate fully without the distractions of a busy courthouse.

Following the meeting with Judge Sweeney, Kathleen Gaskill



Observing a Management Meeting--Karen June (center) gets an insider's-view of a vicinage managers' meeting during her exchange experience in Burlington. Left to right (facing) are Marlene Klandt, HR Division manager; Anita Cassano, HR administrative supervisor; Karen June; Pamela Rogers, Finance Division manager. In the foreground are JoAnne Smith, Civil Division manager, and Jude Del Preore, trial court administrator. (Photo by L. Holt)

Al Farkas, the third party at the table, smiled pleasantly and asked to hear their stories. Mr. Monroe said that Mrs. Morgan hadn't paid her credit card bill and owed \$787.82 and \$394 in interest. Mrs. Morgan said the bill was run up by her late husband, who forged her name after their divorce. Her second husband generously had paid the bill, but it must have been lost in the mail for the check had not been cashed. And why should she pay interest on it?

Farkas encouraged them to talk it out. It wasn't long before a compromise began to emerge. The plaintiff hinted that some of the payment would be better than none at all.

As the mediator went out to make a copy of their signed agreement form, the two parties relaxed and began chatting as though they were old friends. A tense confrontation was defused, thanks to one of the conflict-resolution processes of the New Jersey courts.

Special Civil mediation was one of the scenarios I observed during two days in the Burlington Vicinage as part of the Employee Exchange Program. I was part of an exchange group from the central office that included Karen June, manager of volunteer services programs, and Kathleen Gaskill, manager of complimentary dispute resolution (CDR) programs, both with Trial Court Services; and

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An Employee's-Eye View of the Judiciary's Exchange Program

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and I met with Barbara Sopronyi, the Family Division manager, who provided background about one of the most lively and challenging areas of Superior Court. Patricia B. Roe is Family presiding judge.

"We have a really strong unit," Sopronyi said, noting she has been manager for seven years and a Judiciary employee for a total of 17 years. Cheerful plants adorned her third-floor office overlooking the recently restored historic Olde Courthouse, which is still used for trials.

"The Family calendar is volatile, highly charged," noted Sopronyi, adding that in the majority of cases,



Active Schedule--Burlington's Family Division has a busy schedule of highly charged cases.

money is not an issue. "Our judges are on the bench making decisions non-stop. Therapists and counselors have breaks and time to take and review their notes. Not these judges: it's baptism by fire!"

On the day of the exchange, Judge Michael J. Haas had just been sworn in as a new Family Division judge and was working with retired Judge Cornelius P. Sullivan, who has been serving on recall. The appointment of Judge Haas brings to five the number of judges in the division. "During the court year ending June 30, 2006, we had a total of 19,639 cases added and 19,557 cases disposed," she said.

While Sopronyi spends most of her day on administrative issues, on this day she was devoting attention to a particularly complex case involving a restraining order against an adult

who, at one time, had had a relationship with a teenager.

The first day of the exchange ended with a 2-1/2 hour division managers meeting. Civil Division Manager JoAnne Smith, who spent two days in the central office as part of the exchange program, chaired a lively meeting in which leaders from all nine divisions discussed current issues. These ranged from improving security and developing an effective emergency relocation plan, to studying air quality in one of the court buildings and discussing how best to honor the vicinage's hundreds of dedicated volunteers.

A second day of activities attended by some of the exchange participants included attendance at Special Civil hearings, including mediation sessions such as the one described at the beginning of this article. Special Civil is limited to cases in which the demand is \$15,000 or less.

One of the cases heard in Courtroom 4-D by Judge Karen L. Suter involved a young couple's request for the return of the down payment they made on a house after they failed to secure a mortgage. After questioning the couple and their agent, and reviewing parts of the contract herself, Judge Suter ruled that the money should be returned and included court costs, though she denied the plaintiffs' request for interest and lost wages. "The judgment is in your favor against the defendant," she told the couple, who looked as though a weight had been lifted from their shoulders.

After a fascinating discussion with two mediators—one a retired engineer and the other a retired school principal—an exchange participant went to another part of the building for jury selection (*voir dire*).

"Do members of the jury have strong feelings pro or con regarding chiropractors?"

"What about bow-hunters? What if some of the jurors are into animal rights?"

These and other questions between Civil Judge Michael J. Hogan and attorneys Brian Katz and Mary Brennan were discussed before the prospective jurors were called into the courtroom. Interestingly enough, the case was not about chiropractic or hunting. Rather, it concerned a traffic accident that had occurred five years previously on one of the county's major highways. However, one of the witnesses was a chiropractor and the plaintiff was an avid bow-hunter. Strong feelings about these activities could interfere with a juror's ability to be fair and unbiased.

As the door closed, the judge addressed the individuals called for jury duty. "Our country asks very little of you as citizens," Judge Hogan said in a friendly tone to the 40-some prospects. They looked a little nervous and seemed to be wondering if they would be called for the trial. "Jury service is something we are expected to do for our country. We appreciate your participation. It's a good system, and it works."

Eight jurors were called randomly and asked a list of questions about their work, interests and familiarity with the names of people involved in the trial. Occasionally, an individual would have a question or answer in such a way as to require a sidebar conversation with the judge and attorneys. In this courtroom, sidebars are held in the hall for privacy's sake. There's not *too* much privacy, though, since even sidebars are recorded.

Individuals from all walks of life and circumstances were brought together in the jury selection experience. The woman with the MBA, who read *The New York Times* and didn't watch much TV, sat next to the man in the flannel shirt who worked as a plumbing contractor and couldn't get enough football. There was even a cemetery manager who thought she recognized the last name of the defen-

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Value-Driven Venue

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impact employees individually and the vicinage as a whole.

Judge Sweeney ended by asking each member of the vicinage, "Are we ready to begin the hard work that will bring our values to life and make the words real every day?"

Assisting the assignment judge and trial court administrator in the presentations at the town meetings were Frank Carr, training coordinator; Deborah Edwards, EEO/AA officer; Nancy Gramaglia, ombudsman; and Donna Mazzanti, public information officer.



A Team Effort--Judiciary staff in the Burlington Vicinage study the issues and express opinions during a town meeting.

Judiciary's Exchange Program

Continued from page 10

dant. It turned out she did: she buried his mother a few weeks before.

Eventually, after many comings and goings of prospective jurors, a panel was selected.

Although visiting staff wouldn't be present to follow through with the trial, the experience, like all those in the Employee Exchange Program, was an eye-opening one. The New Jersey Judiciary is a fine example of *e pluribus unum*: out of many, one. A single, cohesive justice system—unified in process from county to county

throughout the state—nonetheless maintains the unique, individual qualities of its different parts.

The Employee Exchange Program enables us to see those parts in action and thereby to appreciate better the system as a whole and to know and recognize the people whose diligence, talent and training make it work.

--Linda Brown Holt

(Litigants mentioned in this article have been given fictitious names.)



Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney answers questions posed by Kathleen Gaskill (center left) and Karen June (center right) during an employee exchange visit in February, as Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore (right) looks on. (Photo by L. Holt)

Mass Tort Resource Book Updated for Wider Audience

by Alyssa Passeggio
Special Writer
Office of Communications

A revised and enhanced edition of the Mass Tort (Non-Asbestos) Resource Book is now available on the Judiciary Web site at njcourtsonline.com. The comprehensive manual is a valuable reference tool for court staff and attorneys involved in mass tort cases in New Jersey and throughout the nation.

The manual explains that a mass tort may be designated by the Supreme Court when there is a large number of claims associated with a product; when a mass disaster produces common technical and legal issues; or when there is a large number of claims from a common environmental or toxic event. A Supreme Court-assigned judge manages all of the individual cases in a mass tort. Mass tort cases being resolved in New Jersey include a number of pharmaceutical, environmental contamination, lead paint and tobacco cases.

Perth Amboy Exhibit Opens At Middlesex County Courthouse

by Alyssa Passeggio
Special Writer
Office of Communications

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali was among the speakers at a reception celebrating the opening of an exhibit about historic Perth Amboy, New Jersey's first capital city. The reception was held Feb. 1 on the second floor of the Middlesex County Courthouse. This permanent exhibit showcases Perth Amboy's role in colonial times, as well as its importance in New Jersey and American history.

"I was stunned by the unique and curious maps and documents we were able to find and the fascinating history and law that went with them," said Superior Court Judge Amy Piro Chambers, who chaired the committee that developed the exhibit.

"Working on this project has increased my appreciation of the legal principles that go back to the colonial period and the role that Perth Amboy has played in the state's history. In addition, it was wonderful to work with the many enthusiastic and

knowledgeable people who lent their support to our efforts," she added.

The exhibit includes a reproduction of the first known map of Perth Amboy, which became the capital of East Jersey in 1684 and served as one of the state's dual capitals once East and West Jersey merged in 1702.

The exhibit includes instructions for the interior decoration of the Proprietary House by Governor William Franklin, who required a yellow drawing room to match his yellow damask chairs. A loyalist, the governor and his wife were seized from this dwelling and never saw their house—or each other—again.

During the colonial period, Perth Amboy was the county seat and the site of the Middlesex County Courthouse. The exhibit includes illustrations of the old jail and courthouse that provide details on this period in Perth Amboy's history. Copies of watercolors of waterfront scenes also are on display.

Perth Amboy also was the location chosen for the signing of the

federal Bill of Rights by the New Jersey delegation—the first delegation to sign that document. New Jersey's copy of the Bill of Rights, kept under glass at the New Jersey State Archives, was transported to a special facility in Philadelphia that was able to reproduce the document without removing it from its protective glass housing.

Another "first" for New Jersey was achieved by Thomas A. Peterson, who became the state's first African-American voter after the adoption of the 15th Amendment; he cast that vote in Perth Amboy. His photograph is on display as part of the exhibit.

The exhibit consists of maps, photographs, paintings and legal documents, many of which include detailed calligraphy, ribbons and seals with accompanying explanatory text. The exhibit was funded by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission and the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Old Meets New—A historic reenactor admires the detail of an old document as other guests enjoy the opening of the Perth Amboy exhibit in January. (Photo by T. Kendig).



Atlantic Criminal Joins the Fight against Heart Disease

by Diane Mason
Administrative Specialist
Criminal Division
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

This year the employees of the Atlantic County Criminal Division joined in the fight against heart disease in women by participating in National Wear Red Day on Feb. 2.

Sponsored by the American Heart Association (AHA), National Wear Red Day was created to raise women's awareness of cardiovascu-

lar disease, heart disease and stroke, and to empower women to reduce their risk. By wearing red clothing or



heart-shaped charms on red ribbons, Criminal Division staff showed their support for women's heart health.

According to the American Heart

Association, heart disease is the leading killer of women. A total of 75 percent of men, but only 62 percent of women will survive a first heart attack. According to the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, more women than men die of heart disease each year, yet women receive only 33 percent of all angioplasties and by-pass surgeries. "Research shows that women may not be diagnosed or treated as aggressively as men," according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Middlesex Vicinage Lauds Perfect-Attendance Employees

by Betty Agin
Court Librarian
Middlesex Vicinage

On Jan. 30, the Middlesex Vicinage celebrated the exemplary attendance of 23 Judiciary employees who used no sick time for the entire 2006 calendar year. The employees were honored at a luncheon in the main courthouse at JFK Square.

Courtesy of the Middlesex Vicinage executive team and presiding judges, a generous hot buffet lunch prepared by the Perth Amboy Vo-Tech Culinary Department was served to the "perfect attendance" honorees.

In attendance to celebrate the special occasion were Family Division Presiding Judge Glenn Berman, Civil Division Presiding Judge James P. Hurley and Criminal Division Presiding Judge Frederick P. DeVesa. Civil Division Manager Joseph J. Lynch, Probation Division Manager James J. Rispoli, Vicinage Finance Division Manager Cam Churgin and Municipal Division Manager George Stahanovich were also present. Judge Sugako Shinkai, from the Japanese judge visitation program, was an honored guest for the luncheon.

Trial Court Administrator Gregory Edwards commended the employees on their diligence in coming to work in all kinds of weather, even enduring challenging days at the office when

possibly feeling "under the weather."

TCA Gregory Edwards has been a member of the perfect attendance club for five years. Most notably, Senior Probation Officer Edward Greene, who started with the Judiciary in November 1985, has not taken a single sick day in his entire career! The other member of the "five-year club" is Natalie H. Myers, Human Resources Division manager.

The following Middlesex Vicinage employees were honored:

Civil Division

Rhoda Brown, Judiciary Clerk 4*
Man Tim Chan, Judiciary Clerk 3*
Fee Hing O'Brien, Court Services Supervisor 2*
Theresa Pranovics, Judiciary Secretary 1 (Confidential)*
Antoinette Sasso, Judiciary Clerk 3

Criminal Division

Marie Keens, St. Probation Officer*
James J. Murray, Criminal Division Manager

Family Division

Lori Doninger, Judiciary Clerk 4*
Charles C. Hager, Family Division Manager*

Probation Division

Ralph Bianchini, Probation Officer
Lamont Bowling, Court Services Supervisor 2*

Marcos Gastou, Sr. Probation Officer*
Edward Greene, Sr. Probation Officer*

Jessie McDaniel, Master Probation Officer*

Chad Wentworth, Probation Officer
Carolyn M. Timmons, Court Services Supervisor. 2

Trial Court Services

Lawrence Bethea, EEO/AA Officer*
Gregory Edwards, Trial Court Administrator*
James Farrell, Court Interpreter 1*
Wayne Fiorino, Asst. Trial Court Administrator*
David Gouss, Administrative Specialist 2*
Natalie H. Myers, Human Resources Division Manager*
Judith Walkes, Judiciary Clerk 2

** denotes employees who have received multiple honors since 2003*

The perfect attendance employee recognition has been a tradition in the Middlesex Vicinage since 2003. That year, there were 11 honorees. The vicinage has seen a steady reduction in the use of sick time each year among employees which has directly resulted in the increased number of employees recognized for perfect attendance.

Wireless Technology Opens Doors to Expanded Probation Services

Continued from page 1

Comprehensive Enforcement Program (CEP) hearing officers taking part in the pilot now have the ability, without needing to find a landline outlet, to access the Probation Comprehensive Automated Probation System (CAPS) database and confirm a client's latest payment or community service hours, check motor vehicle records to see the status of a client's driver's license and review Municipal Court records for new charges.

Drug Court probation officers performing late night curfew checks can access a client's complete record in CAPS and enter casebook notes when the event actually takes place. Previously, any computer activity by probation staff outside the office was dependent on carrying a laptop and finding a landline, which typically meant that such tasks had to wait until the officer returned to the office.

Robert Sebastian, assistant director of Probation Services, told pilot participants that this project began in 2004 under then-assistant director Mary DeLeo and has overcome some significant hurdles before finally being implemented.

"IT had serious reservations about the security issues that had to be resolved," Sebastian told the officers who will be testing the equipment this spring. "They were finally able to ensure safe access to our databases by the use of biometrics: every user swipes a fingerprint into the Tablet to gain access."

Sebastian then had to tackle the next hurdle: funding. In the summer of 2005, money was allocated for the pilot. At that point, the server networking and infrastructure group and office systems unit headed by Ron Wildmann began testing various compact wireless models, and finally the 9 x 12 battery-operated Dell Tablet was

chosen. A total of 21 Tablets were purchased for the pilot, with access to Lotus Notes, CAPS, Promis/Gavel, the Automated Complaint System (ACS), Word, Excel, PowerPoint and the Internet.

Staff in the office systems unit, headed by Mike Rees, tested the equipment, and Chris Tull, an information technology analyst 2 in the unit, developed a "step-by-step" procedure for local IT managers in the participating counties to follow. They had to invest considerable time to configure the equipment for users. The pilot plan called for technical problems to be shared among the four IT staff responsible for the equipment via an e-mail group address, and for Tom Manuguerra, the CEP IT staffer, to take the lead in solving them. The purpose in doing this was to save time in problem solving and to ensure that any tweaking of the equipment was done uniformly in all the pilot counties.

The probation officers participating in the pilot complete a report-of-usage form every week for the first month, and then monthly thereafter. This report captures what databases the officers accessed and what problems they may have encountered.

"We particularly want to know where you may find dead spots in the service," Sebastian told participants. "Given the expense of this equipment, we need to ensure that both the broadband service in the northern counties and the dial-up service along the shore both provide sufficient access for our staff."

When the three-month pilot is completed, these report-of-usage forms, along with time logs from IT staff, will be reviewed to identify the costs and benefits of this equipment.

"We believe that it is appropriate for probation officers to have this equipment in the field," Sebastian said, "and we believe that this pilot will demonstrate the practicality of providing it statewide."

Juvenile Unit of Probation Services Takes Action to Deal with SAB Cases

Continued from page 2

field. She is a trainer in the Juvenile Justice Commission's training and consultation program for clinicians working with this population. As a member of the committee, Dr. Kelly routinely contributes her expertise on all topics under discussion, and thus provides another professional dimension to the probation officers' learning experience. She is now assisting the committee as they address their next goal: establishing protocols for effective communication with treatment providers. Probation officers supervising these clients need to work closely with the therapist to ensure the juvenile's problem behavior is being changed. This requires that our staff know what professional standards exist for evaluations and treatment of this population, and also the kinds and timing of critical information exchanges needed with the therapist.

At the committee meeting on Jan. 31, Dr. Kelly reviewed how an evaluation is conducted on juveniles with suspected sexually abusive behavior problems, including the risk assessment instruments used by evaluators and the limitations of these instruments. Probation officers were given a sample evaluation that incorporated the core elements they should look for in every evaluation.

Dr. Kelly also reviewed the various types of treatment modalities for this population and updates that officers need to receive on a regular basis. Committee members had an opportunity to ask Dr. Kelly questions and exchange information with their peers on supervision problems they have had to address with their clients.

In the afternoon session, Sandra Erik, court services supervisor 2, Middlesex Probation Division, presented

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Probation Celebrates Black History Month

by Linda Taylor
Administrative Specialist 4
Probation Services

The Probation Services Division at the Jersey St. offices in Trenton celebrated Black History Month with an educational program and buffet luncheon on Feb. 22. It was entertain-

ing, informative and the food was excellent! An eye-catching display of artwork and books was also enjoyed by visitors.

Through the reading of original poetry, local author and playwright Alma L. Day educated the audience about the significant accomplishments of African-Americans in public service, industry, sports and entertainment. The highlight of her presentation was a performance about the life of civil rights activist, Fannie Lou Hamer. She brought to life the personal side of a woman who became a public figure as she fought for voter registration rights. Hamer began life as the 20th child of sharecropper parents. She went on to gain voting rights for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. As one of the founders of the National Women's Political Caucus, an organizer on the local level for low-income housing, school desegregation and day-care, she contributed much to others.

The hidden meaning of spirituals, as an aid to the escape of slaves, was explored through the drama and song by Doreleena Sammons-Posey, who also sang at the central office Black History event on Feb. 13. She drew in the audience, and they sang along. She told how the song, "Wade in the Water," warned runaways to use water routes to avoid being caught by the dogs of the slave catchers. Her program, Walk Through Slavery In Song, is the outgrowth of research with her sister that led to the composition of a play.

The event closed with a rendering of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," often called the African-American anthem, led by Sammons-Posey.

Serving on the Probation Services Black History Celebration Team were Vicki Barksdale-Mitchell, Vernita Bell, Denise Groover, Diane Jenkins, Andrea Lyles, Beverly Murphy, Mike Petrone, Jasper Reaves, Brian Rivers, Richard Sims and Linda Taylor.

Juvenile SAB Cases

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a client's case information that was available at the start of the probation period and how it was addressed by the probation officer as the term progressed. The committee will continue to identify and work on goals that facilitate the supervision of these clients. By working collaboratively with other experts, probation officers hope to increase the likelihood that these clients will be successfully rehabilitated during their probationary term.

Warren County Celebrates Second Annual Diversity Day

by Lisa Caravela and Pierrette Torres
Vicinage 13 EEO/AA Unit

The Second Annual Warren County Diversity Day celebration was held from noon to 2 p.m. Dec. 8 in the Jury Assembly Room of the Warren County Courthouse.

Amid a whirlwind of enthusiasm and smiling faces, employees gathered to celebrate diversity and learn about the December holidays during the "Winter Wonderland" event. Sharon Emery of the Probation Division, Alicia Learn of the Operations Division and Sharon Pandolfi of the Criminal Division co-chaired, visualized and coordinated this event along with many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer committee members.

Gene Farkas, trial court administrator, kicked off the program by

highlighting the event as an opportunity to reflect on and learn about different cultures and ideologies and to appreciate each other's differences and similarities. In addition, Farkas thanked the Diversity Day Planning Committee members for their dedication and tireless efforts. "Events such as this show a commitment to educating each other on the different cultures that make up our vicinage community."

Participants enjoyed various holiday songs sung by Julie McKeon of the Warren County Probation Division, as well as a performance by the guitar and string ensemble, The First Hollow Rounders. Contributions to the event included more than 40 delicious international entrees and desserts.



Diverse Cuisine--Staff enjoy an array of dishes from various traditions during the Warren County Diversity Day observance.



Tech-KNOWLEDGE-y

In Case of the Worst Possible Scenario

by Janet Bastien, Project Manager, Information Technology

That horrific tornado in Alabama, the tragic fall of the World Trade Center in New York, the devastating tsunami in southeast Asia....

What if something like that happened here? Sure, your immediate concerns are for human life and the safety of your families, but what would become of judicial records destroyed in a disaster? Now that the official court record is stored electronically, what if a hacker somehow broke through our firewall and other levels of security we employ and wiped out or altered all those dispositions you entered after this week's court sessions?

"Preparedness is the key," advises Ron Witt, the Information Technology Office's court executive responsible for our IT Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP).

"The DRP is designed to address any emergency recovery effort made necessary by fire, flood, earthquake, tornado or high winds, computer crime, terrorist activity or criminal sabotage," Witt explained. "It is nearly 1,000 pages long (and growing) and is structured with sufficient detail to permit any IT-savvy staff, even those totally unfamiliar with the Judiciary, to competently restore our critical systems."

Of companies that had a major loss of computerized records, 43 percent never reopen, 51 percent close within two years and only 6 percent will survive long-term, according to a 2005 study cited in Wikipedia and produced by Cummings, Haag &

McCubbrey, well-published IT gurus. The Judiciary does not consider shutting down or losing records an option, and has had disaster recovery procedures in place for many years now. Remember the Y2K Day in May 1999 when we brought up a mirror-image database and advanced the date to see if we could operate in the new millennium?



Photo courtesy of FEMA

That is similar to practice runs for disaster recovery that ITO has been executing at off site locations (called "hot sites") for many years, practicing to restore operations from back-up files we create on a daily basis. They are called hot sites because they stand by ready to replicate our IT environment in case of emergency.

Fran Daniels, an information technology analyst who works with Witt as ITO's disaster recovery coordinator, has been meeting with ITO managers and staff of our applications, database, network and operations teams collaboratively to develop and test Phase I of the new DRP.

"With all the changes in the

mainframe applications and the network operating system, we are working to create the new DRP to support this new technology," Daniels explained. She plans to reach out to vicinage IT managers this spring and subsequent phases of the DRP will involve the Business Continuity Plan (BCP), where methods analysts and users will participate in an important process to validate and test applications and define procedures to support continued operations during a disaster. BCP activities will also be coordinated with the logistical, safety and security planning efforts of the Court Access Services and Facilities Management Units of the Office. Summarily, the DRP provides a single comprehensive resource to:

- Identify the orderly course of actions to be taken if the data center at the Justice Complex is damaged, destroyed or otherwise rendered inaccessible;
- Describe an organizational structure and protocol for initiating and managing a recovery effort (for executing the plan); and
- Define criteria and process for declaration of a disaster and for making an informed decision to restore IT services at our disaster recovery alternate site.

We hope we never need to see how good a job ITO has done in the coordination and development of the DRP, but we should draw some comfort and gratitude from their efforts to keep us going should the worst ever happen.



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.