

# HEARSAY

## GENESEE COUNTY CIRCUIT AND PROBATE COURTS E-NEWSLETTER

a quarterly publication

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FALL 2014

## WELCOME TO HEARSAY!

The committee is excited to bring you *Hearsay*. It is designed to keep you informed on the happenings inside the court as well as downtown. *Hearsay* will also spotlight employees, county history and what you would like to see.

We want to hear from you! Send us an email letting us know what you would like to see in the newsletter and feedback on the current edition. You can also submit ideas and information about what's going on within your department.

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## WHAT'S THE RISK?



Youth involved in the juvenile justice system typically present with multiple problem areas. At times it can be difficult to determine what problem(s) should be prioritized. Should the focus lie on those factors which are *criminogenic*, or crime producing? Or, should all social service concerns be addressed? What has been learned through extensive research is that re-offending is largely predictable. There are validated key predictors, or risk factors, known to elicit crime. They are: *Prior History & Current Offenses; Family Circumstances/Parenting; Education/Employment; Peer*

*Associations; Substance Abuse; Use of Leisure/Recreational time; Personality/Behavior; and Attitudes/Orientation.*

Juvenile probation officers have the critical role of developing case plans and recommending interventions that drive down those factors that lead to re-offending. How do they do this? They start by using an evidence-based tool designed to assess each youth's needs.

The family division entered into a university partnership that resulted in the use of an evidence-based risk assessment tool known as the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0.

*Continued on Page 3*

### YLS STATS

- ◆ To date, a total of 741 initial assessments have been conducted, along with another 703 reassessments and 380 exit assessments
- ◆ The gender and race breakdown is
  - 74% Male
  - 26% Female
  - 50% African American
  - 41% Caucasian
  - 6% Multiracial
  - 3% Hispanic
  - <1% Asian
- ◆ The most frequently marked risk factors
  - Peer Relations
  - Use of Leisure/Recreational time

# THE CHIEF SPEAKS

I applaud the effort by circuit and probate court staff to develop a court newsletter. Taking the time to include articles of interest and share accomplishments is a worthy endeavor. There is much that we can point to with pride, with still many challenges ahead.

## Public Satisfaction Surveys

In 2013, the court was required to conduct a public satisfaction survey. It was the first time that SCAO required all courts to participate. We enlisted the assistance of local students from Bendle and Flushing High Schools. Mark Kalandyk and Jim Bauer recruited the students.

The results of the survey show that 99% of the responders indicated that they were treated with courtesy and respect

by court staff, 95% felt that the judge or referee treated everyone with respect and 98% felt safe in the courthouse.

We will again participate in a public satisfaction survey November 17-21, 2014.

Five consecutive days are required this year, with a scaled down number of questions.



## E-filing

SCAO is in the final stages of working with the legislature to pass a law that will permit trial courts to embark on e-filing. This is a revolutionary step

and will require judicial and court staff decision making and collaboration. It is the future of the court.

A number of e-filing pilot projects were authorized by SCAO over the last several years.

Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and a few others have gone before us to develop best practices. No additional pilot projects will be authorized, as SCAO concentrates on a statewide solution.

## Child Care Fund Audit

I am also pleased to announce that court passed the Child

Care Fund Audit. This is an annual event, conducted by DHS, to determine if the court is complying with the requirements associated with permissible expenditures from the Child Care Fund.

These funds are used to underwrite a portion of the operational costs of the juvenile probation department and for juvenile placement services. A successful audit includes appropriate court orders entered in a timely manner and documentation of the delivery of services.

The Family Division Judges, Referees and Staff are to be commended for a job well done. In future editions, I will share with you other information of interest to judges and staff. -cj rby

# ADMINISTRATOR CORNER

*Hearsay* will feature an article in each edition by either Jim Bauer, Probate Court Register & Administrator, or Barbara Menear, Circuit Court Administrator.

Court staff may wonder why a local administrative order [LAO] is required for various court practices and processes. More precisely, when is one required and how is it obtained.

Trial courts may issue administrative orders governing internal court management, pursuant to MCR 8.112(B).

The Chief Judge is required to submit a proposed LAO to the regional State Court Administrative Office for review. If approved, the court is notified.

If the order is not approved, discussion may follow to address any drafting concerns. Once approved, the LAO is numbered by year and number, for example #2014-1. The submission and approval process is conducted via e-mail.

An approved LAO must be provided to the office of the circuit court clerk for public inspection.

The new court website features all local administrative orders for the current year and selected ones from previous years.

#2014-5J addresses how the Probate and Circuit Courts will respond to "Inclement Weather or other Emergency" that may include closing the courts.

The staff sections of the order mirror the resolution passed by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners relative to general county operations. The court specific sections relate to jury

trials in progress and jurors required to initially report on a day for which the court may be closed due to weather or other emergency.

The first LAOs for each year set forth the days that the court will be closed for recognized holidays or furlough days.

If an LAO is submitted on behalf of more than one court in the county, the number will include a "J" to reflect that it is a joint order. -bmenear



- ◆ Thank you to Keith Francis, Controller, Cindy Carnes, Purchasing Manager, Ray Zanke, Director of Building and Grounds, and the Genesee County Board of Commissioners for getting the steps at the Beach Street entrance fixed.
- ◆ The Probate and Circuit Courts will partner on the pub-

lic satisfaction survey, November 17-21. Individual staff may be asked to assist.

- ◆ Adoption Day is Tuesday, November 25, 2014. This celebration is always a happy day at the court. It highlights the adoption process.

- ◆ There were 16 suggested titles submitted for the court newsletter. The committee selected *Hearsay*.

- ◆ Remember recycling is back. Note the items that are permitted. Be a responsible recycler. Click [here](#) for more information.

# NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

Visit the site at [www.7thcircuitcourt.com](http://www.7thcircuitcourt.com)

On September 22 the circuit court launched a new webpage which includes interactive features and more dynamic tools. The webpage developer, The Spencer Agency, guided us through this process by assisting with how to write relevant web page con-

## KEY WEBSITE FEATURES

- ◆ Online register of actions
- ◆ Weekly judicial schedules
- ◆ E-Mail contact information for select court staff
- ◆ Internal search engine
- ◆ Online payment capability



tent, overall organization and adding graphics and photos. One of the main purposes of the new website was to share information in a user

friendly manner and to enhance navigation and access. There are links to self-help legal assistance resources and email contact information for requests for ADA accommodations and interpreters. Social media has also been incorporated into our site. Court announcements and information for the public will be shared on Twitter and Facebook.

## WHAT'S THE RISK? (CONT'D.)

The YLS (for short) is a 42-item questionnaire, used in conjunction with other collateral contacts and documents, that translates into 4 levels of re-offense risk – low; moderate; high; and very high. Our primary focus is to evaluate the youths' needs and develop case plans through a uniform and objective lens. This practice allows for consistency across cases and it can also be a very effective method in reducing continued delinquency. It

further allows for the engagement of the youth and provides an opportunity for parents to assist in reducing their child's risk level. As case plans are developed, we promote the natural supports that many families have yet we must also address any impediments to treatment engagement. Lastly, we must recognize that the proper dosage of treatment is essential. The functionality of this tool is much more robust

than simply aiding in decision making and case planning. It can drive many of the structural decisions in a juvenile probation department. Risk assessment tools can assist Family Division Judges and Referees by identifying youth with low risk scores who may be suitable for diversion. Likewise, it can also identify high risk youth and aid in the development of programming and resource allocation. –dmelton

*“This practice allows for consistency across cases and it can also be a very effective method in reducing continued delinquency.”*



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Introducing David Combs

At the same time that technology evolves, the way we work changes too. This increased demand for court technology led us to create another technical support position. **David Combs** is the new Court IT Technician. He started in late September and is located next to Rob Gifford on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We are excited to

now have a court technology team! This positions us to become a “court of the future” so that we can stay abreast of the technological innovations that undoubtedly will be coming our way. He will assist Rob Gifford with courtroom operations, video conferencing and other issues related to court technology support.

Dave comes to us from a mental health support service agency known as Consumer Services where he was an IT specialist. He is a senior at UM-Flint, majoring in computer information systems. If you have not met him, please take a moment to stop and introduce yourself and make him feel welcome. –jpatsy

# HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHT: Where did the cannons come from?

The cannons on the grounds of the Courthouse Square were used in the Civil War to guard Washington D.C. Governor William Crapo was from Flint and served as the Governor of the State of Michigan during the Civil War. The cannons were decommissioned and then returned to the birthplace of Governor Crapo, where they have stood ever since.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War continue to be the caretakers of the cannons. They were recently painted and the bases repaired.

The triangular collection of civil war cannonballs were recast during the Courthouse Square Restoration Project

and paid for by private donations.



The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War were honored by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners in 2013 for their commitment to honor the memory

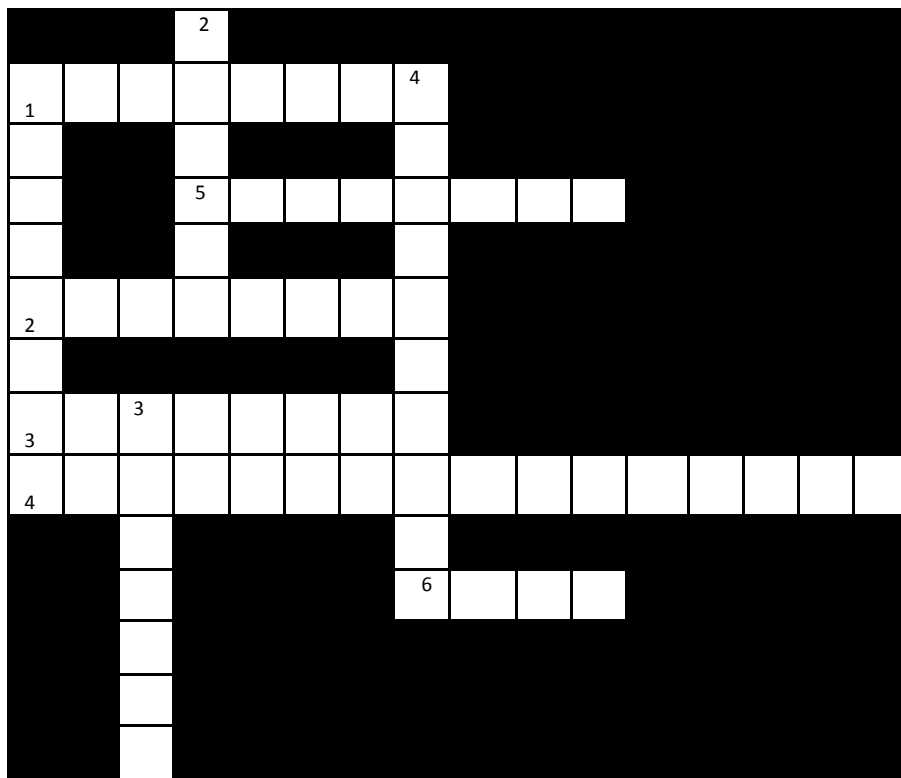
of those who served in the military during the Civil War and for their stewardship to the cannons on the grounds of the courthouse.

Attorney Don Shaw is active in the organization and holds a leadership position.

A plaque on the first floor honors those who made a donation to the cannonball restoration project.

Previous cannonballs were lost or stolen over the years. The current cannonballs are welded together and present a formidable mass to deter theft. —bmenear

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Click [HERE](#) to open the puzzle

### ACROSS:

1. One who gives a deposition.
2. Types of personal property as opposed to real property.
3. A person named in a will to carry out its terms, that is, to execute the will.
4. Refers to the prevention of a judge from hearing a case. This is proper when any interest may impair the ability of a judge to decide the case in a fair and impartial manner.
5. A written order requiring a person who is addressed to do some specified act, generally connected with his or her duty as a public official. Latin, "we command."
6. An injury or wrong committed against the person or property of another, arising out of the violation of a duty established by law

### DOWN:

1. A verdict issued by a judge at the conclusion of a civil jury trial when a party has not presented sufficient evidence to establish a necessary part of the case. A \_\_\_\_\_ verdict is issued in response to a motion brought by a party.
2. The act of sending a person to a prison, reformatory, mental hospital or other facility, pursuant to a court order.
3. The reversion of property to the state when a person dies leaving no heirs.
4. The verbatim record of proceedings in a trial or hearing.

—ecarter