

# HEARSAY

## GENESEE COUNTY CIRCUIT AND PROBATE COURTS E-NEWSLETTER

a quarterly publication

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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

OCTOBER 2015

## GENESEE COUNTY SPECIALTY COURTS (PART 2)

### Judge Barkey

*Mental Health Court* targets offenders with a serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance or a developmental disability.

It began in 2007 and offers offenders the opportunity to participate in court based treatment in lieu of jail or prison terms.

Intense judicial oversight is provided as well as treatment through Community Mental Health.

Other program features include drug testing referrals to community services such as clothing or housing resources, transportation assistance and assistance with obtaining employment. Currently there are 54 participants. (Court Staff: **Amber Gillean, coordinator; Gail Redmond, clerical support**)

*Veteran's Treatment Court* integrates the same principles as mental health court but focuses on military veterans and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The program promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response

that involves collaboration with the traditional partners found in mental health courts, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, volunteer veteran mentors and organizations that support veterans.



This court became operational in 2013. Currently there are 14 participants. (Court Staff: **Debbie Rice, coordinator**)

### Judge Fullerton

*Business Court* was created in 2013 as a specialized docket that is designed to provide timely, efficient and predictable case management and disposition.

The docket includes business or commercial cases that meet the statutory requirements of the law. There have been 90 cases referred to Business Court. (Court Staff: **Marcia McCree, Judicial Secretary; Julie Schrinier, Court Clerk**)

### Judge Latchana

*Adult Felony Drug Court* was the initial specialty court in Genesee County.

The focus is on substance use or abuse through treatment, rehabilitation, intensive supervision, frequent judicial status hearings, drug testing and graduated incentives or sanctions.

Drug courts emphasize a team approach that includes judges, prosecutors, case managers, probation officers, law enforcement personnel, defense counsel and treatment providers. There are currently 49 participants. (Court

Staff: **Rhonda Judd, coordinator, Mary Moors clerical support**)

*Urban Drug Court Initiative* is similar to the Adult Felony Drug Court but is limited to offenses committed in City of Flint. There are currently 32 participants. (Court Staff: **Dana Baumgart, coordinator; Mary Moors, clerical support**)

# THE CHIEF SPEAKS

## Double Jury Courtroom Upgrades

The *Courthouse Square Project* provided an opportunity to add a double jury courtroom. "Courthouse West" was dedicated in July 2001 and has been well used ever since.

Judge Farah is assigned to the double jury courtroom, but it is often used by other judges as the need arises. Over the years, we have come to understand that the double jury courtroom needed revision.

One design issue was the location of the witness box. Because of the increased number of attorneys and litigants in the larger courtroom, sight lines to the witness were compromised when the maximum number of participants were seated at the litigation tables. The ability for all participants to see the witness is critical to the integrity of the proceedings.

Second, the ever increasing use of courtroom technology caused

us to consider what has been introduced in other courts around the country. Technology



is changing at a fast pace. Some of the developments are particularly helpful.

Passing to jurors, hard copy documents that have been admitted as evidence, causes a delay in the proceedings. Asking a witness to review hard copy documents and perhaps noting where he or she was located in the photograph may best be done by means other than hard copy.

After working with the Genesee County Purchasing Department

and the Genesee County Board of Commissioners, an architectural and courtroom design firm was retained. Several remedial options were reviewed and one selected as the final scope of work.

The initial piece of the project has begun. A courtroom users group was assembled to share with the firm the shortcomings of the space and suggestions were received for improvements. Based upon those remarks, and others by judges and court staff, there is a plan.

The witness box will be projected further into the well of the courtroom for improved sight lines.

The courtroom recording system will be upgraded and an amplification system installed.

There will be a "smart cart" that will include a projector, Elmo and other technology equipment that will be available to all at-

torneys. The court technology team will conduct training sessions, at frequent intervals, to allow trial attorneys to operate the equipment.

The wall directly across from the jury will have a large screen, @164 inches on the diagonal, and a ceiling mounted projector. The bench and all litigation tables will have monitors for visual presentations. In addition, there will be a large screen behind the witness box for remote witness participation and a monitor directed toward the public gallery.

The court technology team will be associated with the project and provide leadership as we move forward.

The timeline for the project contemplates weekend work as much as possible, to allow the courtroom to remain in use.

There may be a 2 week period where the courtroom will be unavailable. Completion is expected in the spring of 2016.

-cjrby

## ADMINISTRATOR CORNER

I recently attended a meeting organized by Commissioner Jamie Curtis and Genesee County Controller Keith Francis announcing Project ERP that Genesee County will begin implementing in October of this year.

ERP stands for Enterprise Resource Planning, and it is an integrated software system that allows payroll, finance, budget, human resources and other related information to be combined into one system rather than having four or more stand-alone computer systems that do not share information.

Once this new system is in place end users will be able to access information from all of these areas from one site. The software solution is called Advantage 360 from a company called CGI – a global provider of IT services and solutions based in Fairfax, Virginia.

The county does not have to buy software or hardware to implement this project - the vendor maintains the software.



Both Kent County and the City of Grand Rapids are implementing the Advantage 360 system.

Nearly all of the cost to implement the project is being funded through a grant from the State of Michigan.

It is exciting to see Genesee County continuing to move forward using advanced technology designed to continuously improve both efficiency and service to its citizens. -jb





The Crim | Source: mlive.com



Back to the Bricks | Source: mlive.com

## DOWNTOWN HAPPENINGS

As fall comes upon us, many of us may be looking for ways to get up, get out & get away from raking those leaves! Here are some great happenings going on in Flint!

### CRIM TRAINING

Downtown was inundated with runners, walkers & cyclists in August for the 2015 Crim Festival of Races. The Crim is one of the largest 10 mile races in the country, starting and ending on the bricks downtown. There are still races to take on before the end of the year. Join a Crim training program and get in gear for 2016!

### BACK TO THE BRICKS

Streets were closed & flooded with thousands of spectators attempting to get a glimpse of their favorite car at this sum-

mer's Back to the Bricks. Buicks were invited to party at the Durant-Dort Carriage building to celebrate 112 years of Buick! With the array of activities being offered such as Civil War reenactments and automotive art & church tours, B2B really made a fun filled family day.

### NEW RESTAURANTS:

**Merge** – Flint's newest Asian fusion restaurant is located downtown near U of M. With many of their dishes prepared with products from the Farmers Market, they offer Korean tacos, noodle bowls & much more. This restaurant offers weekly specials & deals after 5pm. Stop in for lunch & try a new spin on Asian cuisine.

**MaMang** – Located in the Flint Farmers market, they offer a refreshing twist on Vietnamese cuisine. Their menu is loaded with sandwiches, soups and noodles and most of their food is gluten free.

**The Ground Floor** is open on S. Saginaw Street declaring to be Flint's only grab-n-go lunch spot! They offer coffee & pastries for a quick breakfast & sandwiches from The Crust and Oliver Ts. Fresh cinnamon rolls available every Monday for "CinnaMonDay"!

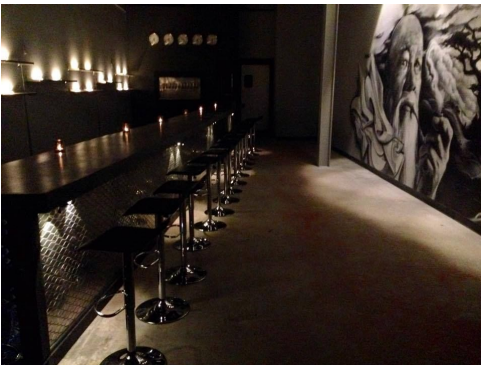
### FREE STUFF!

The Jazzwalk, presented by the Greater Flint's Arts Council, is taking place at the White Horse & Cork from 5-9pm October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

October 2<sup>nd</sup> is Friday Artwalk! From 6-8pm spend an evening with outstanding art, artists, food & live music.

Participate in the Strides Against Breast Cancer walk October 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am. See their website for more registration info.

Flint Farmers Market presents Healthy Halloween Trick or Treat on October 24<sup>th</sup>.



Merge | Source: mlive.com



MaMang | Source: mlive.com



The Ground Floor | Source: mlive.com

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Left to Right: Diana van der Vossen, Jennifer Burke, Alyssa Hunt, Michelle Windsor and Dustyn Coontz.

## **Diana Van der Vossen – Circuit Court Secretary**

Diana is currently working in jury office. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Michigan – Flint. For 3 years she was an admission specialist

with Mott Community College and has also worked as a secretary to the Computer Science, Engineering and Physics Department at UM-Flint. She has only been here for a month but says that she enjoys working with the broad spectrum of individuals in the jury pool and helping them appreciate the importance of jury service.

## **Jennifer Burke – Judicial Advisory Assistant Judge Behm**

Jennifer is the new judicial advisory assistant to Judge Behm. She attended high school in the Grand Rapids area and received her undergraduate degree in political science from the University

of Michigan. She possesses two graduate degrees: a master's degree in social work and a juris doctor degree from Columbia University. She plans on practicing child welfare law and enjoys working with Judge Behm on the parent representation project.

## **Alyssa Hunt – Deputy Register Probate Court**

Alyssa comes to the court with a background in retail management and customer service. She has an associate's degree in general studies from Mott Community College and is currently attending UM-Flint with a focus on business and management studies. (cont'd on page 6)



- Congratulations to Judge Newblatt for receiving the *2015 Philip A. Hart Award* from The Michigan Women's Studies Association, in recognition of establishing the first Girl's Court in the State of Michigan.

- Thanks to Attorney Don Shaw and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War for removing graffiti that was on one of the historical markers on the Courthouse Square.

Accessing a national network of experts who care for other memorials, a solution was identified that did not deface the monument. Shaw, and the other members of the organization, also serve as caretakers for the cannons and cannonballs on the Courthouse

Square, poised for a facelift in the spring of 2016.

- We gratefully acknowledge receipt of new video conferencing equipment for all of the circuit and probate courtrooms, thanks to funding from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). Seven of the courtrooms have been completed. The remaining four courtrooms will be done by the end of 2015.

- The limestone walls adjacent to the stairs at the Saginaw Street entrance will be repaired before winter. There has been a fair amount of flaking and limestone falling off for some time.

- The next *Tech Talk* is scheduled for October 22nd.

The topic will be the *JAVS* courtroom recording systems. This session is limited to judicial office staff and Referees.

An email and sign up sheet will be circulated by the tech team. *Tech Talk* is a 30 minute session designed to upgrade or refresh skills on selected topics. There is a 15 person maximum for this session. The previous *Tech Talks* have been sell-outs. Don't delay in signing up, when you receive the email.

- Thanks to Genesee County Building and Grounds for their recent work in Judge Beagle's courtroom and adjacent spaces. Painting and millwork repair were part of the job. It looks great.



# THE AUTUMN “BACK TO SCHOOL” TEST

The following 10 questions relate to Genesee County or the State of Michigan. See if you can answer the questions.

**The first four court employees to send an email to [Hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com](mailto:Hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com) indicating that they took the test, will receive a prize!!**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The cannons on the Courthouse Square were actually in service during the Civil War. Where were they located? | 6. What was the original name of Clio?  |   |
| A. Lansing  | A. Standish   | A. Judge Stewart Newblatt   |
| B. Detroit  | B. Linwood  | B. Judge Stephen Roth   |
| C. Sault Ste. Marie   | C. Varner   | C. Judge Damon Keith  |
| D. Washington D. C  | D. Birch Run Creek  | D. Judge Arthur Tarnow  |
| E. Springfield, Illinois  | E. Thetford Center  | E. Judge David Lawson   |
| 2. How many historical markers are there on the grounds of the Genesee County Courthouse?                       | 7. Where does the northernmost extension of Dixie Highway (Dort Highway) end?   | 10. Who was the federal district court judge who entered an order related to the former Genesee County Jail, ultimately leading to construction of a new jail facility? |
| A. 1  | A. Bay City   | A. Judge Stephen Roth   |
| B. 2  | B. Mackinaw City  | B. Judge Stewart Newblatt   |
| C. 3  | C. Grayling   | C. Judge Harland Caswell  |
| D. 4  | D. Gaylord  | D. Judge Dale Riker   |
| E. 5  | E. Alpena   | E. Judge Donald Freeman   |
| 3. Who was the Governor of Michigan during the Civil War?   | 8. What country was the home of Albert Champion, the founder of AC Spark Plug?  |   |
| A. Henry Crapo  | A. Australia  |   |
| B. Josiah Begole  | B. South Africa   |   |
| C. David Buick  | C. France   |   |
| D. J. Dallas Dort   | D. Belgium  |   |
| E. Douglas Houghton   | E. England  |   |
| 4. There is another Genesee County in which state?  | 9. Who was the federal district court judge who issued the landmark decision on “busing” as a mechanism for school desegregation? |   |
| A. Maine  |   |   |
| B. Washington   |   |   |
| C. Ohio   |   |   |
| D. New York   |   |   |
| E. Massachusetts  |   |   |
| 5. What was the name of the department store located in what is now the McCree Building?                        |   |   |
| A. Montgomery Ward  |   |   |
| B. Smith Bridgeman’s  |   |   |
| C. J L Hudson   |   |   |
| D. J C Penney   |   |   |
| E. Younkers   |   |   |



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D)

She is new to the court system and states that she now has a much greater appreciation for the substance and the complexity of the law.

**Michele Windsor – Deputy Register Probate Court** Michele is also new to the court system. Her prior employment experience includes working at Fenton High School as a financial clerk. In addition she has worked at the Department of Communication and Visual Arts at UM-Flint. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from UM-Flint. She states that

she is still in the learning and training phase and enjoys the ambience and support of her co-workers.

**Dustyn Coontz – Judicial Advisory Assistant Judge Barkey** Dustyn attended high school in the Lansing area and received his bachelor's degree from Spring Arbor University. He majored in international studies and went on to receive his juris doctor degree from Michigan State University College of Law. As a student he interned at Prima Civitas, a nonprofit economic

and community development organization. In addition, while a law school student, he volunteered with Legal Services of South Central Michigan. -jep



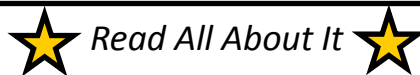
## BACK TO SCHOOL TEST ANSWERS

1. D 2. C Genesee County Courthouse (1989), Sarah Emma Edmonds (1992) and Resisting Slavery, Robert J. Cromwell (2005) 3. A 4. D 5. A 6. A 7. B 8. C 9. C 10. B



### CORRECTIONS, OMISSIONS [AND FORGIVENESS FOR BOTH]

- The article on Specialty Courts in the July 2015 edition did not mention that Amber Gillean provides clerical support for the juvenile mental health court. She has served in that role for two and a half years.
- In addition, in the employee spotlight, Natasha Warren, was referred to as Natasha Walker. Natasha is now a juvenile probation officer, still working with Girl's Court.



Hearsay is now available on the Circuit Court website [www.7thCircuitCourt.com/hearsay-newsletter](http://www.7thCircuitCourt.com/hearsay-newsletter)

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 activity in your department. [hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com](mailto:hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com)