

The Maverick

The SOLO & SMALL FIRM SECTION Newsletter
Contra Costa County Bar Association, California

December 19, 2011

May you have warmth in your igloo, oil in your lamp, and peace in your heart!
– Eskimo Proverb

January

January Solo & Small Firm Practitioner's After Work Meeting:

Date: Thursday November 19, 2011
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Location: Maria Maria
1470 North Broadway
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Free appetizers; attendees to pay for their own beverages. Please email Anina Dalsin at Ann.Dalsin@DalsinLaw.com to RSVP.

Guests and non-section members welcome

February

February Solo & Small Firm Practitioner's Breakfast Meeting:

Date: Thursday, December 16, 2011
Time: 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Location: Sunrise Café
1559 Botelho Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Free breakfast for Solo & Small Firm Section members. \$20 charge for others. Please email Bill Hickey at bill@wahickeylaw.com to RSVP.

INTERVIEW WITH A MEMBER

Amy Miller
The Law Offices of Gary D. Sparks
2890 North Main Street, Suite 205
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amy@sparksfamilylaw.com



Areas of Practice: Family law, estate planning and probate. Amy's practice focuses on all aspects of family law, including divorce, paternity, domestic violence, support and property division. Amy especially enjoys helping people handle their uncontested divorces and devotes a large part of her time to those matters. Her practice also includes helping people design their estate plans, including wills, revocable trusts, advance health care directives and powers of attorney.

Back Story: After attending Penn State and working briefly as a real estate agent in Pennsylvania, Amy moved to San Francisco in 1994 and graduated from San Francisco State (political science).

While at SFSU, Amy spent several years working with Women in Community Service, a national nonprofit dedicated to reducing the number of women living in poverty. Amy's passion for public interest and social justice led her to New College of California School of Law, the country's first public interest law school. During law school, she had the opportunity to intern for various legal organizations gaining valuable experience in the areas of domestic violence, landlord/tenant law, and civil rights.

Since being admitted to the State Bar of California in 2001, Amy has worked as the Alameda County Small Claims Legal Advisor and then worked for many years with the Contra Costa County Superior Court's Family Law Facilitator's Office gaining valuable experience with the court and continuing her passion for helping unrepresented litigants.

After the birth of her first son, Amy sought some work-life balance and left the court for private practice, joining the firm of Scramstad & Bryan, P.C. as a part-time associate for over three years. When her youngest was ready for preschool, she returned full-time to the Facilitator's Office, which by this time had greatly expanded the types of services they offered, including increased assistance with divorce, custody, paternity, domestic violence and guardianship matters. However, after two more years at the court, Amy was once again ready for a change of pace and greater work-life balance. In March 2011, Amy joined The Law Offices of Gary D. Sparks as a part-time associate.

On working in a small firm: After giving much consideration to pursuing solo practice, Amy realized that she prefers the camaraderie, sense of teamwork and ability to collaborate that a small firm practice offers. She also appreciates the more flexible schedule that a small firm offers for her family and loves that the firm she works for believes that family comes first!

Extracurricular: Amy's husband, Sven, is a middle school social studies teacher at The Athenian School and they have two young, very active boys (8 and 5). Amy is on the board of the Parent

Teacher Association at her sons' school. While Amy grew up outside of Philadelphia rooting for the Phillies, after 17 years in the Bay Area, she made the full transition to the other coast and is now an avid SF Giants fan. Amy also enjoys hiking, skiing - and an occasional 5k race.

By: Heidi Coad-Hermelin

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

Hail to the Chief !! There will be a change in the Board for 2012. The Board welcomes Heidi Coad-Hermelin as the new Section President. Anina Dalsin, Dorianne Romero Plihon and David Pearson and will continue their service and Bill Hickey will return as a board member.

Monthly After Work Meeting (Odd Months – 3d Thursday) & Breakfast Meeting (Even Months – 3d Thursday): Again in 2012, we are holding after work meetings and breakfast meetings in alternate months. In odd months, on the third Thursday of the month, we plan to meet from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria in Walnut Creek for drinks, appetizers and networking. In even months, on the third Thursday of the month, we plan 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café, also in Walnut Creek.

After Work Meetings (Odd Months – 3d Thursday):

1/19	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria
3/15	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria
5/17	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria
7/19	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria
9/20	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria
11/15	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Maria Maria

Breakfast Meeting (Even Months – 3d Thursday):

2/16	7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café
4/19	7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café
6/21	7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café

8/16 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café
10/18 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café
12/20 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Sunrise Café

How do the Section members feel about these meetings? Any thoughts on making the meetings more attractive to you? Please let the Section hear from you by email to bill@wahickeylaw.com.

Articles: Want to highlight your practice area (and yourself)? The Maverick is always looking for comments on issues of general interest. If you would like to submit a comment of up to about 750 words, please contact bill@wahickeylaw.com.

SUGGESTION BOX

Suggestions for developing The Maverick, and the Solo & Small Firm Section generally, are welcome. Please contact:

William A. Hickey: bill@wahickeylaw.com
Ann M. Dalsin: Ann.Dalsin@DalsinLaw.com
David Pearson: attorney@mac.com
Dorianne Romero Plihon: drp@rplawpc.com
Heidi Coad-Hermelin: hch@hermelinlaw.com

CONTRIBUTIONS



Please send questions, comments, corrections, jeers, personal and professional members' news and contribution submissions to The Maverick at: bill@wahickeylaw.com

Information for submission or publication must be in my hands 5 days before publication goal of the 1st of

the month.

CLASSIFIEDS

Section member ads run free of charge. We run ads for three consecutive months. Advertisers then need to take ads off for three months before re-submitting them for a new three month period. Submit ads to William A. Hickey at bill@wahickeylaw.com.