

The Maverick

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

November 10, 2011

Who does not thank for little will not thank for much.
– Estonian Proverb

Our current fearless leader, Bill Hickey (that would be me), has now served for the past two years and is stepping down. We are seeking nominations for a new president. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact any of the current board members all of whom are listed at the end of the newsletter.

We will stop accepting nominations on December 15, 2011

November

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

Date: Thursday November 17, 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

The 2010 Contra Costa County MCLE Spectacular:

Date: November 18, 2010
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Location: Walnut Creek Marriott

The Solo and Small Firm Section looks forward to providing you in Seminar 10 at 1:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. with the product of years of experience, for 1 hour ETHICS and 1 hour GENERAL PARTICIPATORY MCLE Credit:

Running a Law Firm: *Tips and Tricks for Solos and Small Firms*

Efficient running of a solo/small firm, including start-up issues, marketing/client development, billing and effective communication with the Courts.

See the brochure and register at:

<http://www.cccba.org/attorney/mcle/special-events-mcle.php>

December

December Solo & Small Firm Practitioner's Breakfast Meeting:

Date: Thursday, December 15, 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

Deborah Jo Sandler
Law Office of Deborah Jo Sandler
1990 North California Blvd., Ste. 600
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Ph: (925) 943-7456
Fx: (925) 943-5440
djsesq@mindspring.com



Areas of Practice: I practice exclusively in the area of family law, including divorce, custody and visitation, move-away custody disputes, property division, prenuptial and postnuptial agreements, domestic partnerships, same-sex relationships, support, and post-Judgment modifications. I continue to represent and advocate for clients in family law litigation matters, but have also expanded my practice to include collaborative divorce (in which I serve as a member of a collaborative team of professionals working with the family), mediation services (in which I serve both parties as a neutral), and consulting attorney services for clients undergoing mediation. I earned my undergraduate degree from Pitzer College, and my JD from Golden Gate University.

Back Story: Family law is all about people. As an extrovert, I have always been drawn to this area of law because I love the interactions with people. Every client who comes to me has a different story and a different problem to resolve. Many are in severe distress, emotionally, financially, and legally. They often feel overwhelmed by their pending divorce or other family law problem, and need help navigating their way through. I derive tremendous satisfaction from helping people through these diffi-

cult situations and out to the other side, hopefully in better shape than when they began the process. I have extensive litigation experience, including as Court-appointed Minor's Counsel in extreme high-conflict family law cases. After many years of seeing first-hand how much damage high-conflict family law litigation does to families, especially children, I have begun to move my practice in a different and kinder direction. I no longer do minor's counsel work. My practice now focuses increasingly on collaborative divorce and mediation, two processes in which clients commit to engage with each other with honesty and mutual respect, and to work together to reach an out of Court settlement that meets both parties' interests.

Legal Activities: My memberships include the State Bar's and Contra Costa County Bar Association's Family Law Sections, Collaborative Practice East Bay, and the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals. I serve on the Steering, Public Education, Modest Means and Membership Committees of Collaborative Practice East Bay. My other activities with CPEB include planning, implementing and occasionally speaking at monthly Divorce Options seminars (part of a statewide effort by collaborative practice groups), and as well as helping to plan and implement a Pro Bono Modest Means Collaborative Clinic held periodically at the Contra Costa Bar Association's offices. I have served as a Judge Pro Tem for the Contra Costa County Family Law Division, as well as participating in the Double Pro Per program for settlement conferences.

When I was doing Minor's Counsel work, I presented at County-sponsored Minor's Counsel trainings, as well as at Custody Issues Committee meetings on Minor's Counsel issues. I also mentored newly trained Minor's Counsel attorneys. I was recognized by Battered Women's Alternatives (now STAND) for Pro Bono representation of a domestic violence victim at trial, and by the Contra Costa County Family Law Division for my work on behalf of Minors. I was one of the attorneys who took the first County-sponsored family law mediation train-

ing in the early 1990's, and have provided Pro Bono mediation at Court.

Favorite reference/resource: Other attorneys! It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a village to practice law.

On Being A Solo: The flexibility of solo practice has allowed me to be as available as possible for my two children, as well as to give me time to have a full life outside of my law practice. I also like having the ability to choose which clients I will work with, and which ones I will respectfully but very firmly send away. Although I enjoy the autonomy of being on my own, I also enjoy my connections with other solos and small firm practitioners. It's very important to maintain connections with other attorneys, as solos risk otherwise becoming isolated.

Extracurricular: I am passionate about singing, maintaining long-term memberships in my synagogue choir and in the Cantare Chorale, an auditioned 100-voice symphonic choir that often gives concerts with full orchestra. I take occasional voice lessons (I would term myself a very enthusiastic amateur singer, and am not giving up my day job!). My other singing activities include serving my synagogue as a para-cantor (helping lead services in song), long-term membership in the San Francisco Folk Music Club, participation in various regular singing sessions, leading singing workshops at Folk Club events, and 10 years of past concerts in our children's elementary school with my husband when the kids were younger. When I am not singing, I enjoy hanging out with my husband, our 21 year old son, our 17 year old daughter, our rescue mutt, and many friends old and new. I am also a regular at several local farmer's markets, and love to cook what I find there.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

Articles: Want to highlight your practice area (and yourself)? The Maverick is always looking for comments on issues of general interest. If you

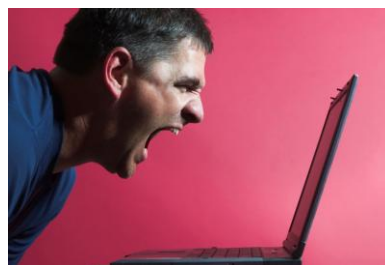
would like to submit a comment of up to about 750 words, please contact bill@wahickeylaw.com.

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.

Solo With Space

One window office for rent in shared suite in Class A building near BART. Copier. Conference Room. Library. Underground parking. \$1,000/month. Call Jay. 925-933-5890.

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Solo Seeking Space

Attorney with predominantly insurance defense and real estate practice seeks to share space with other congenial lawyers. Looking to rent two attorney offices, one staff office or station, professional reception area and shared use of conference room. Good Class B space in Lafayette or Walnut Creek preferred. 925-962-1616.

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Solo Section members Larry Israel and Eric Samuels have announced the formation of a new partnership firm. They have joined forces as Israel & Samuels LLP. The firm's primary focus will be business law, including general transactional work, labor matters, and civil litigation.

Larry will continue to operate out of the same office at:

4454 Deer Ridge Rd.
Blackhawk, CA 94506
Phone: 925-648-7582
Fax number: 925-886-8319
E-mail Larry@Israel-Samuels.com.

Eric will work from a new office for the firm at:

1816 Bonanza St., Suite 305
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Phone 925-482-0067
Fax: 925-886-8319
E-mail Eric@Israel-Samuels.com.

For more than 10 years, in his solo practice, Larry has published an informative monthly newsletter for clients and others titled Business Law Update. Continuing publication will now be taken over by the new firm. Larry has advised us that he would be happy to add any member of the Contra Costa County Bar Association to the e-mail distribution list (no charge). If you'd like to be added to the list, please advise Larry at the e-mail address shown above.

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