



The Judicial Branch News

Volume 4, Issue 10

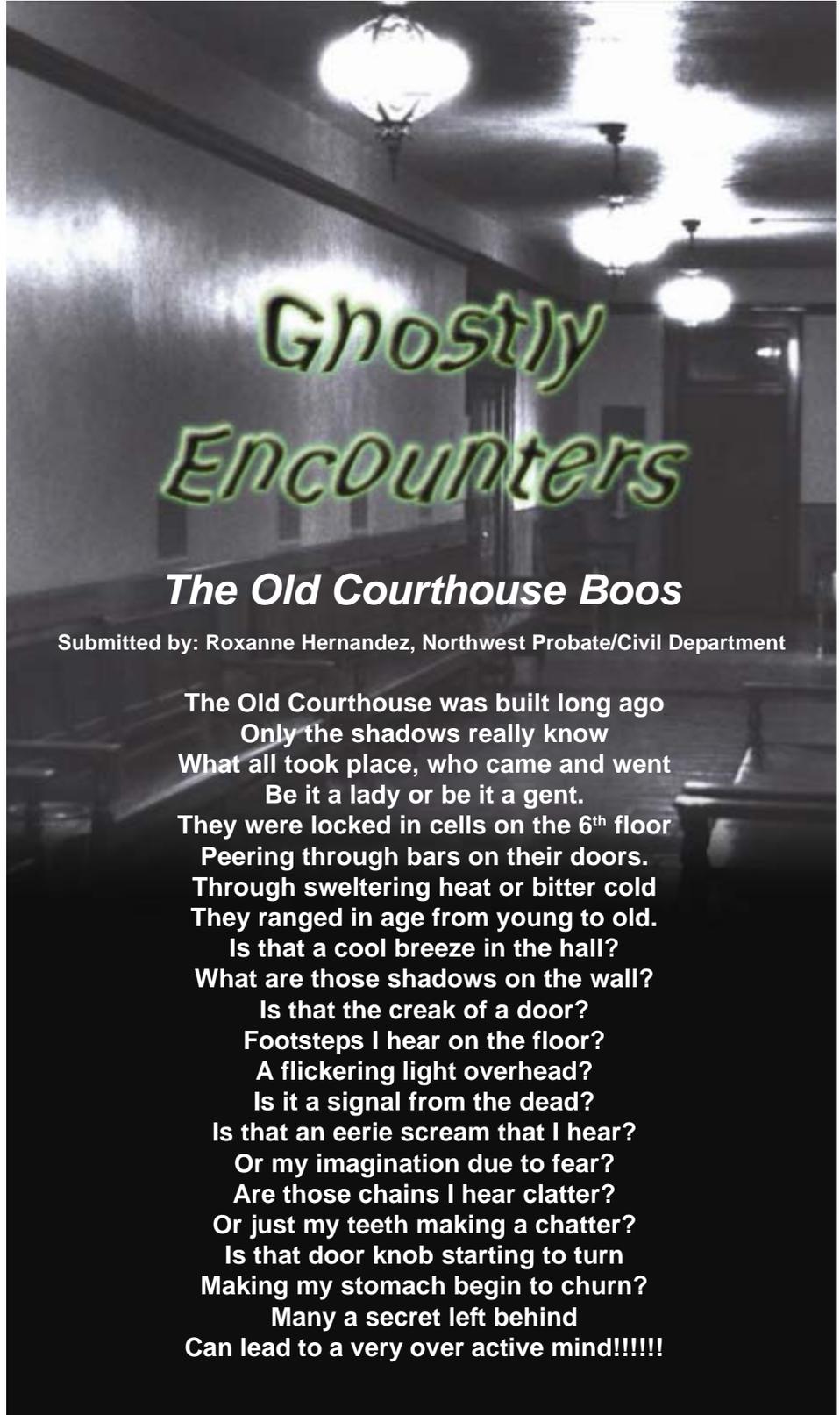
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The *Judicial Branch News* is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations and Community Outreach Department.

If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please send articles, news items, photos or other correspondence to: karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.

"Committed to the Timely, Fair and Impartial Administration of Justice."



Ghostly Encounters

The Old Courthouse Boos

Submitted by: Roxanne Hernandez, Northwest Probate/Civil Department

The Old Courthouse was built long ago
 Only the shadows really know
 What all took place, who came and went
 Be it a lady or be it a gent.
 They were locked in cells on the 6th floor
 Peering through bars on their doors.
 Through sweltering heat or bitter cold
 They ranged in age from young to old.
 Is that a cool breeze in the hall?
 What are those shadows on the wall?
 Is that the creak of a door?
 Footsteps I hear on the floor?
 A flickering light overhead?
 Is it a signal from the dead?
 Is that an eerie scream that I hear?
 Or my imagination due to fear?
 Are those chains I hear clatter?
 Or just my teeth making a chatter?
 Is that door knob starting to turn
 Making my stomach begin to churn?
 Many a secret left behind
 Can lead to a very over active mind!!!!!!

Message From the Presiding Judge



Barbara Rodriguez Mundell
Presiding Judge

During the last two fiscal years, the Court has experienced a large increase in cases and, so far, the first two months of FY2010 has shown little relief.

When Superior Court releases its statistical report later this month, you will see a dramatic spike in the number of civil cases filed in Fiscal Year 2009.

The Civil Department experienced a combined 57 percent increase in new case filings during the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years.

The rapid rise in cases can be mostly attributed to the number of eviction and breach of contract cases filed as a result of the mortgage crisis. Keeping up with these cases has been no small feat. Historically, when the economy is in recession or in a significant downturn; the number of civil case filings increases nationally.

The tough economic times have forced the Court to take a hard look at ways to maximize our limited resources to continue to deliver jury trials in a timely manner.

Beginning in December, an additional judge will be added to the Civil Department to help handle the increased caseloads. We are taking a Family Court Calendar out of Northeast and converting it to a Civil calendar that's coming to Downtown Phoenix.

More than ever, Superior Court has utilized its pool of retired judges. The Civil Presiding Judge appoints retired judges when a case needs to be expedited, is complex and may require a lengthy trial. Retired judges have flexible schedules and are able to handle cases expeditiously. While the Court has a pool of retired judges who are willing to take a case on occasion, they make the final determination of whether or not they are available to take a case.

Having a pool of retired judges is a tremendous asset during these difficult economic times.

News and Notes

Adult Probation Department Receives Grant for Prison Re-Entry Initiative

The Adult Probation Department received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to increase public safety by improving the offender re-entry process.

More than 160 offenders per month are released from the Arizona Department of Corrections with a consecutive sentence to probation. Many of these offenders have critical needs, such as housing, health care, and mental health care. In order to smooth their transition, the 15 new officers will conduct pre-release assessments, triage offenders based on needs and provide specialized reentry supervision to stabilize the offenders' most critical needs. They will also locate offenders who do not report to probation so that they can be engaged in supervision or returned to court. The Prison Re-entry Initiative will include collaboration with the Department of Corrections, Magellan Health Services, housing providers, and many other government agencies and community-based organizations.

**Submitted by Cathy Wyse
Adult Probation**

The Law Library: Keeping You Informed

One of the ways the Law Library keeps the court up-to-date on legal issues is through a publication called the Court Informer. The Court Informer is a current awareness service the library began offering in August 1996 and publishes on a bi-monthly basis.

Every newspaper and the table of contents to every journal, law review, magazine, and newsletter received by the library are scanned for articles related to a variety of law-related topics. There are many subscription-based online resources that provide content as well. The topics in the Court Informer include: **Adoption, Foster Care & Juvenile Justice; Alternative Dispute Resolution; Capital Cases & Capital Sentencing; Courts & Court Administration; Criminal Justice; Ethics; Evidence; Family Law; Guardianship & Probate; Juries & Jury Reform; Technology and the Law; Trial Practice;** and a **General Interest** category.

The citations in the Court Informer tend not to be Arizona-related. Rather, the purpose of the Court Informer is to make you aware of what other courts may be doing as well as other legal issues that may affect your personal and/or professional life. Perhaps an article may give you an idea for doing your own job better or offer a suggestion to help improve the overall function of your department. Maybe you're going to school and need something related to a current legal event. Whatever the reason, the Court Informer is one way to stay abreast of current legal issues. You can see each issue online back to January 2002 at <http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/LawLibrary/LibraryInformation/Publications/informer.asp>. You can also send an email to sarmstrong@scll.maricopa.gov to be put on an electronic mailing list and have the Court Informer delivered directly to your inbox. The library will gladly provide you with copies of any articles listed in the Court Informer.

**Submitted by Susan Armstrong
Law Library**

News and Notes

New Judge Set to Hear Family Court Cases

On November 2, Superior Court Judge Pam Gates will begin her family court calendar in the Old Courthouse.

Judge Gates will take over Judge Susanna Pineda's calendar. Judge Pineda will begin training for her new criminal calendar.



Pam Gates

Before her appointment to the Bench, Judge Gates was a partner with the law firm Bryan Cave, where she has worked since 1997. She worked for the law firm O'Connor Cavanagh from 1996 to 1997.

Judge Gates graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1996 with distinction, and received her undergraduate degree from Drake University in Iowa in 1993.

She is active in many community organizations, including service on the board of UMOM New Day Centers, Arizona's largest homeless shelter for families.

Meet Bert Binder

By Sybil Taylor Aytch, Maricopa Lawyer

A technology enthusiast, Bert Binder has served as the electronic courtrooms administrator for the Maricopa County Superior Court system since September 2006. In this capacity, she is responsible for the design, implementation, and support of more than 170 electronic courtrooms throughout Maricopa County (Superior Courts and Justice of the Peace Courts).

In addition to managing the maintenance and operations of courtroom equipment, Bert provides training for attorneys and staff on courtroom recording systems and evidence presentation equipment, and conducts e-courtroom presentations for local groups and visitors from throughout the country.

Known for her initiative, Brian Karth, currently the Clerk of the Court for the United States Bankruptcy Court, District of Arizona, who initially hired Bert for her position at the Superior Court, confirms that "Bert hit the ground running."

Meet Bert Binder - Continued on Page 6

Court Security Briefs

• **Random Employee Screening.** At Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell's request, in May 2009, Court Security increased random employee screening from approximately every 70th person to approximately every 5th person. We have recently had several employees who have refused to be subject to the random screening process. These employees have attempted to get in the building using a different door or by changing their position in line. As a result of their conduct and with Judge Mundell's approval, these employees have temporarily lost bypass privileges. Court Security truly appreciates all of you who politely and graciously participate in the screening process and hope that this email will decrease the problems we have experienced with the random screening process.

• **Jury Duty and Use of your Bypass Badge.** If you are summoned to court on jury duty, please remember that you should not use your bypass badge to access the building or to move around the building. The reason behind this is the perception or misperception that the use of your badge creates when plaintiffs, defendants, victims, witnesses, other jurors, etc., see you use your badge.

• **Confiscated Prohibited Items.** From January 1, 2009 to September 30, 2009, Court Security confiscated more than 66,000 prohibited items including more than 400 self-surrendered guns, and 5 undisclosed guns.

• **Thank you.** Just a note to thank all of you that help make security's job easier and make this place a safer place to work especially all floor wardens, alternates and sweepers.

Submitted by Karen Westover
Court Security

Court Technology Services

Meet Bert Binder continued..

“Having previously come from the hectic and pressure packed world of courtroom presentation systems,” he continues, “Bert instinctively looked to address the needs of the litigants, jurors and judicial officers within the courtroom environment.”

Bert holds a bachelor’s degree in justice studies administration and a master’s degree in human resources management. She started her career in the legal field in 1987 as a paralegal and has been employed in both the government and private sectors, including two of the largest law firms in Arizona. She is a founding member of the Paralegal Division and served on its Board of Directors from 2002-2003, as well as on a variety of committees (including the original Arizona Paralegal Conference Committee) to help further the goals and objectives of the division.

Bert’s career in technology implementation and support began in 1998 when she became a litigation support specialist for a large law firm in Phoenix. Prior to her current position at the Superior Court, she served as president of Advanced Litigation Resources, providing trial consulting and litigation technology training services nationwide.

Since 2001, Bert has been a member of the adjunct faculty in Phoenix College’s ABA-approved Paralegal Studies Program. She initially taught the litigation technologies course and currently serves as the program’s internship coordinator. Bert’s contributions to the Paralegal Studies Program have been invaluable in her role as internship coordinator, as a member of the advisory committee, and through her work on the e-court advisory board in development of Phoenix College’s e-court, a replica of a Superior Court electronic courtroom.

Scott A. Hauert, Esq., chair of the Phoenix College Legal Studies Department and director of the Paralegal Studies Program, calls Bert a “dedicated, experienced faculty member who understands both the students’ needs and what it takes to be successful in this field.”

Scott also recognizes Bert’s contributions to improving the program. “When we decided to build our e-court,” he says, “it was Bert who provided the technical expertise for planning and helped us coordinate with the vendors. Her experience during the process was invaluable.”

So, the next time you have a trial coming up in an electronic courtroom, be sure to contact Bert Binder. She is a sea of calm and professionalism during stressful times.

Sybil Taylor Aytch, a founding member and former president of the Paralegal Division, is a paralegal at Quarles & Brady, LLP, and an adjunct faculty member at Phoenix College.

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E-Court Team Joins CTS

The Electronic Courtroom Team (ECT) became part of CTS in July, 2008. Since that time, CTS and others have had the opportunity to gain a better appreciation for the services provided by the ECT, which *Maricopa Lawyer*, a publication of the Maricopa County Bar Association, recently highlighted in an article.

Additional accolades of the ECT were noticed at the recent Court Technology Conference in Denver, Colorado. Specifically, the innovation of the ECT was mentioned when speaking with many service providers and individuals in court leadership throughout the Country.

The *Maricopa Lawyer’s* article focused on the work of Bert Binder but she doesn’t work alone. As much as I admire her work, the key to the success of the ECT is Bert’s “right arm,” formerly known as Ken Crenshaw, and the group of ECT Monitors located in various regional centers that ensure systems are functioning correctly.

The Judicial Branch, CTS, and the public all benefit from the services and contributions made by Bert and the ECT team.

**Submitted By Kevin Westover
CTS Director of Enterprise
Infrastructure**

Court Tower

Photos to Be Displayed in Court Tower



Maricopa County's 2009 Combined Charitable Campaign *Arizona, the Beautiful* Photo Contest

Showcase your favorite Arizona photograph in the first Annual Combined Charitable Campaign "*Arizona, the Beautiful*" photo contest.

Rules:

1. Photo prints must be Arizona specific. Please include a short description of where photo was taken.
2. Each contestant may enter up to five photos - signed and dated by the photographer. **Entry fee of \$10 per photograph must be submitted to: Barbra Hart - Govt. Relations/Communications, 301 W. Jefferson, 10th floor, (602) 506-2263.**
3. Each photo (color or black/white) must be mounted in an 11X14 frame. Please note the picture will **not** be judged by the framing.
4. The photo entry categories are:
 - A. Scenic
 - B. Architecture
 - C. Nature – plants, rocks, water, etc.

NOTE: Photographs of people or animals is not permitted. Photo submission deadline is November 13th. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place *Arizona, the Beautiful* photographs will be displayed in the new Court Tower building, currently under construction. While the building is under construction, the winners' photos will be on display in the lobby of the County Administration Building located at 301 W. Jefferson.

For more information, including entry form: visit <http://ebc.maricopa.gov/cc> or call Barbra Hart (602) 506-2263

News and Notes

Emergency Management Seeks Employee Volunteers

Twice a year, teams of highly trained volunteers spread out into the desert surrounding the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. They aren't looking for terrorists or gaps in the plant's defensive barriers; they're looking for a much more elusive quarry. You can't see, touch or taste what they are after. They are searching for the edges of a cloud of radioactive gases that could be released after an incident at the plant.

Their mission is to identify the radioactive isotopes and determine how large an area has been impacted. Results of their surveys determine what actions the State will order to protect those residents in the area.

The team is also looking for volunteers. The Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management is seeking County employees to assist the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (ARRA) as volunteer Radiological Monitors for the annual Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station Exercise, as well as in any actual emergencies.

Volunteers should be physically capable of performing potentially strenuous monitoring tasks in sometimes adverse conditions. Protective respiratory devices and/or anti-contamination clothing may be used during response operations. As a result, volunteers must not have a history of heart or respiratory problems.

Volunteers must be available to attend training involving both classroom and field study scheduled for November 2 - 6, 2009. Training includes the use of personal dosimeters and survey meters to detect radiation. After this initial training, the remaining volunteer commitment consists of a couple of days of refresher courses, participation in the annual dress rehearsal and exercise in the Spring.

Because of the shared County and State responsibility for this vital function, Maricopa County's representatives to the Radiological Monitoring pool serve side-by-side with their counterparts from the Arizona Department of Health Services. Funds are available to reimburse personnel salaries, including employee-related expenses, for days spent training and participating in the exercises.

If you would like to be considered for a Radiological Monitoring Team, please contact John Padilla at (602) 273-1411 or padillaj001@mail.maricopa.gov and provide your work address, telephone number, e-mail and fax number no later than October 26, 2009.

**Submitted by Julie Symopoulos
Emergency Management**

Payroll Moves to their New Location

Judicial Branch payroll has moved to the East Court Building, 3rd floor, suites A & B.

Payroll will be sharing space with Human Resources.

**Submitted by Danna Quinn
Assistant Director of Human Resources**

New Northeast Presiding Judge Named

Judge Robert Budoff will become the Northeast Presiding Judge on January 1, 2010.

Former Northeast Presiding Judge Eddward Ballinger will swap calendars with Judge Cathy Holt. Judge Ballinger will move to Durango and take a juvenile calendar, and Judge Holt will move to Northeast and take a civil calendar. The moves will take place over the holidays.



Volunteers needed for NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY on Saturday, November 21, 2009.

Be a part of this nationwide event – the 2008 Maricopa County event was the largest event in the nation.

To volunteer, please send an email expressing your interest to lesliegarner83@yahoo.com no later than October 30th.

Courtside

Photo Highlights



Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell delivers the oath of office to Superior Court Judge James Beene during his investiture ceremony on October 16 in the Board of Supervisors Auditorium in Phoenix.

As part of the investiture ceremony, Susan Beene, wife of Superior Court Judge James Beene, robed her husband.



Photo by Yvonne Reed, Maricopa County Recorder's Office

(Left to Right) - Election Director Karen Osborne, Deputy Election Director Linda Weedon, and the Hon. Helen Purcell, Maricopa County Recorder, present at the JAMS retreat on the topic of Engaging and Retaining Top Talent.



Left to Right - Court Administrator Marcus Reinkensmeyer, Karen Kitani and General Jurisdiction Court Administrator Phil Knox. Kitani, a payroll coordinator with Superior Court, retired after 18 years of service.