



The Circuit Times

Volume Two

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Recent Addition to the Bench Hails from Across the Pond

The Judges of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit welcomed into the fold George Richards, Circuit Judge, on December 11, 2009. Judge Richards was appointed by Governor Crist in August 2009 to fill the seat of the late Honorable Lynn Dailey.

Judge Richards was born in England, but came to the United States in 1980. He was an avid rugby player and in 1984 sustained a spinal cord injury that left him unable to play. He then focused on his education eventually earning his law degree from the University of Miami School of Law.

Prior to his appointment Judge Richards worked as an Assistant State Attorney in the Ninth and Thirteenth circuits of Florida. Later he joined the Office of the Statewide Prosecutor. He was the Chief Deputy Statewide Prosecutor when he was appointed to the circuit bench.

Judge Richards was sworn in on December 11, 2010. The Oath of Office was administered by Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp.

Judge Richards is assigned to Charlotte County and presides over civil cases.

"Moving On" Ceremony Marks Beginning of the Hard Work Drug Court Participants Will Face

On January 14, 2010 the Hendry County Drug Court held its first "moving on ceremony" at the Hendry County Courthouse. It was the first such ceremony held in Hendry County, a concept introduced by Judge Christine Greider. Unlike graduation ceremonies that imply the individuals have completed their work, "moving on" implies there are more steps to come and this is indeed Judge Greider's belief. As she told the two gentlemen that were at the center of the ceremony, "the hard work is just beginning". She also told the men how proud she was of their work in the program and the differences she saw in each of them. (*cont. pg. 2*)



Part-Time Magistrate Takes the Bench in Hendry County

Collier County Attorney Ed Larsen was sworn in by Chief Judge G. Keith Cary on January 22, 2010 to work as a magistrate for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit. Mr. Larsen fills a recently developed part-time magistrate position for Hendry and Glades Counties. He will spend one day a



Chief Juge G. Keith Cary administers oath to Edward Larsen, Esq.

month in Glades County to assist Judge Jack Lundy and five days a month assisting Judge Christine Greider. He will cover foreclosures and civil and family law cases.

Specialty Courts Get Coordinator in Charlotte County by Sherry Munroe

In October of 2009, Charlotte County received a JAG Grant for a Specialty Court Coordinator position to work with the Charlotte County Drug Court and Mental Health Court. Gerald Gray was hired and began on December 1, 2009. Mr. Gray previously worked as an investigations officer in the Pretrial Services Department in Charlotte and was retired from DJJ with over 36 years of service.

This Specialty Court Coordinator position is responsible for case management activities that provide assistance to the mental health and drug court teams, which includes the Judiciary. Early intervention and expedition of eligible defendants into either specialty court program is a primary objective. The Specialty Court Coordinator's responsibilities involve extensive planning, organizing, coordinating, and monitoring activities in accordance with policies and procedures, judicial standards, and Florida Statutes, as well as the Ten Key Components for Drug Courts. This position will allow the courts to gather and maintain data and performance measures for both courts.

The response has been positive and tweaks have been made to the programs including: the creation of a centralized referral form utilized by both courts, utilization of the jail visitation computers for referrals from inmates or family members, an incentive plan for participants, and the immediate notification of referrals to all team members which aids in decreasing the time from arrest to admittance.

Drug Ct. cont. from pg. 1

The two men were praised by their State Probation Officer, Kathy Lombardo and the Drug Court SWAFAS counselor, Isabel Morrell, for their work. **O f f i c e r L o m b a r d o** commented on how changed the men were since she first met them and stated she knew they could continue on the right path.



Judge Greider along with Drug Court Team Members and Participants.

Each man spoke of his experience participating in Drug Court and thanked Judge Greider for "caring about me when I didn't even care about myself". They also committed to starting a Drug Court Alumni Association to support others who will follow in their footsteps and to pay back what they have received. According to Judge Greider, an alumni association will be very beneficial to this rural community where there are so few resources.

The ceremony was well attended. The gallery was populated with the Drug Court Team, Drug Court members and their families, local officials (Judi Kennington-Korf, County Administrator and Hendry County Sheriff Steve Whidden among others) State Attorney Steve Russell, Public Defender Kathy Smith, many attorneys and courthouse staff. It was followed by fellowship and a luncheon prepared by members of the Drug Court Program.

Collier County Crisis Training Complete

by Chuck Rice

The Collier County Probation Department has had all its officers complete CIT -or- Crisis Intervention Team Training. As of March 2010 the remaining probation officers graduated. The training was made available to the probation department by Lt. George Welch, Collier County Sheriff's Office, and Kathryn Lieb Hunter, Executive Director of the Collier County National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The training was offered at no cost other than the Probation Officers' time.

The training was first offered in June 2008 when Probation Officer Charles Crews attended and graduated. Thereafter, he was instrumental in working with the Collier County Sheriff's Office and NAMI to allow for the training of the remaining Probation Officers. Mr. Crews continues to assist with each CIT class by volunteering for role playing exercises and as a presenter for each class representing the Collier County Mental Health Court.

The CIT Training has proven to be beneficial for Probation Officers when they interact with persons under their supervision diagnosed with a mental illness or developmental disabilities. The training helps the officers to recognize observable features of mental illness, learn how to effectively interact the with a person diagnosed with a mental illness, and identify possible courses of action based on the observable behavior. These skills better enable the Probation Officer to effectively interact with the individual to avoid confrontations. Also, these skills improve the officers' communications skills and enhances their abilities to handle adversarial situations.

The Probation Officers have expressed a greater confidence in their own abilities to work with their probationers with a mental illness who are all too often misunderstood.



Probation Officer Aids in Arrest

by Chuck Rice

The Collier County Probation Department along with the Collier County District 3 Special Enforcement Team (SET) conducted a joint investigation and field visit that resulted in the arrest of an individual currently under the supervision of the Probation Department for possession of drug paraphernalia. The Special Enforcement Team is an undercover team that uses street contacts to identify drug dealers, thieves and other criminals. The District 3 SET frequently contacts the Probation Department to help find people of interest. In this instance it was to locate the husband of a probationer who was believed to be using/selling or making methamphetamine.

On February 23, 2010 Probation Officer Christopher Wilkinson and the District 3 SET went to the home of the probationer. The probationer tested positive for methamphetamine and admitted to consuming it. She was arrested for Violation of Probation. The husband was arrested as he tried to flee the residence.

Acetone, a scale with white residue, small plastic baggies and altered light bulbs were found in the shed behind the probationer's residence. Thus leading SET to believe the couple was manufacturing methamphetamine.

Teen Court Involvement Generates New Curriculum in High School

The Teen Court Program began again in Hendry County in September 2009. Marcia Salmon the Program Coordinator (right) has worked very hard to make the program a success so that the youth in Hendry County can atone for their transgressions without



(cont. pg. 5)

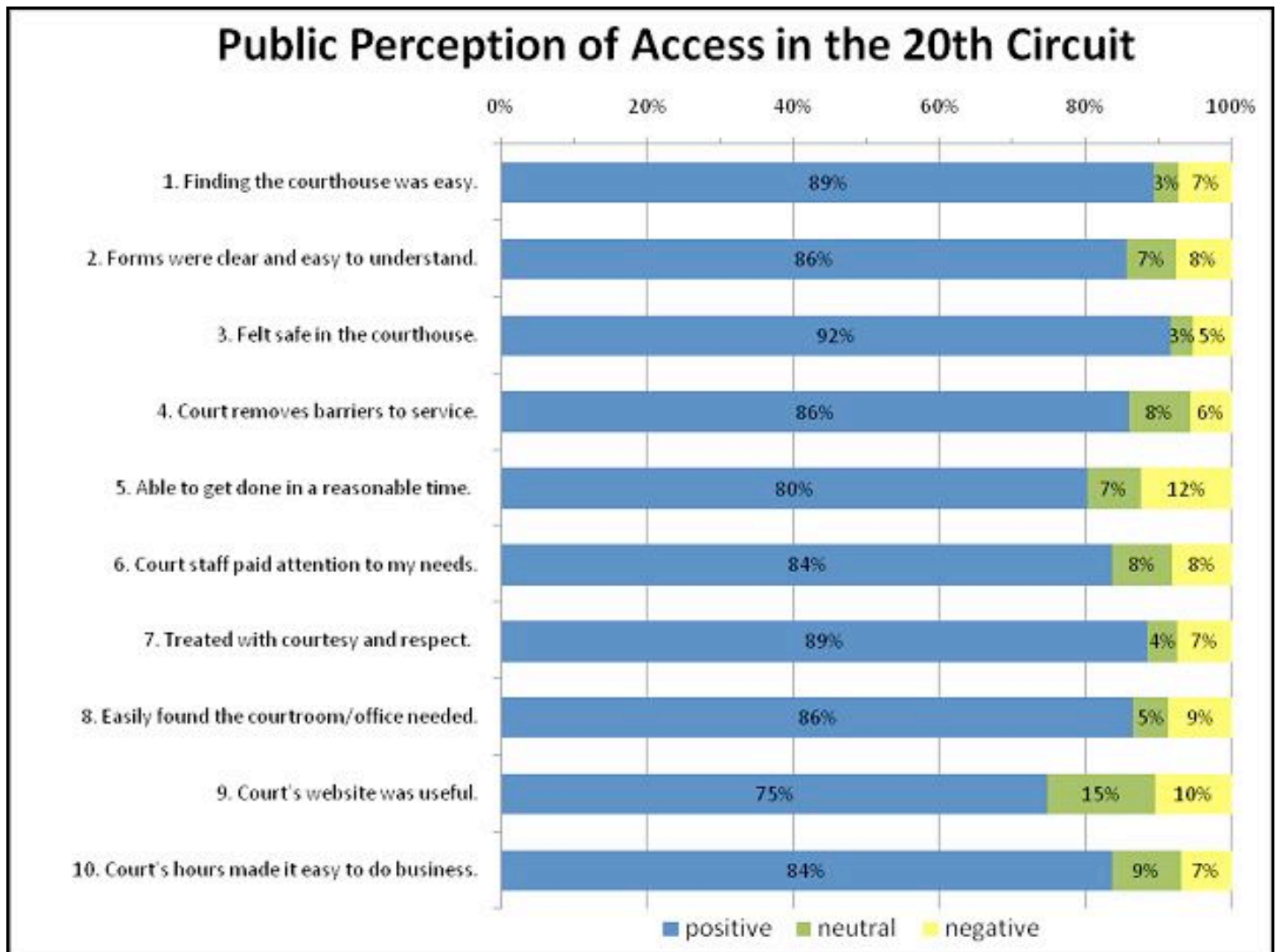
Users Believe Court Performs Well

by Lisa Kiesel

Providing access to court services is important to the Judges and staff of the 20th Judicial Circuit. To that end, in November 2009 the Court conducted a survey of the courthouse users in all five counties to gain their perspective on how well the courts provide access to services.

The results of the surveys were favorable and indicated that most users thought the courts performed well. All but one question received a positive response rate of 80% or higher (the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to the statement). Of significance is that 92% of the respondents agreed to question three, "I felt safe in the courthouse" (see chart below).

This survey is a gauge on how the courts are doing and provides a road map for areas of improvement. One of these areas is that some respondents did not think the court's website was useful. In response, a website committee has been established to review the website and determine what information would be more useful to court users. Overall, the survey provided valuable insight and will be conducted on an annual basis.



Criminal Case Management Underway in Two Counties

Charlotte County began phasing in criminal case management on November 1, 2009. In cooperation with stakeholders from criminal justice agencies including the State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Charlotte County Clerk of Court, Charlotte County Criminal Bar Association, Administrative Office of the Courts, Pretrial Services, Criminal Conflict Council, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, and Judge Alane C. Laboda and Judge John W. Dommerich the Plan, Procedures and Guidelines were written and approved.

This phase of the case management plan automatically diverts all first degree, life and capital felonies; second degree homicides; and all felony crimes involving children onto the complex case docket. Other felony cases may be placed on the complex docket if deemed necessary by the Judiciary, State Attorney's Office or defense counsel.

Judges Laboda and Dommerich are the two Felony Criminal Judges working the complex case docket in Charlotte, and Pretrial Officer Chris Simpson is the case manager for both. (*Sherry Munroe*)

Hendry County launched criminal case management in March under the direction of Administrative Judge James D. Sloan and Circuit Judge Christine H. Greider. The Hendry County BoCC (Board of County Commissioners) approved the use of funds for a new position that performs jail management functions and case management for felony court.

Arraignments held on the March 16th began the first cycle of scheduling for CMCs (case management conferences) while cases on the sounding docket later that day were set for PTCs (pretrial conferences). CMCs and PTCs are court events that add value to the court process by assessing cases, setting them on tracks as either expedited, standard or complex and assigning date

goals for resolution of the cases based on the track assignment.

Pretrial Officer Marilu Sanchez is assisting Judge Greider by combing through cases and identifying special circumstances that may alter time goals, numbers of continuances, discovery issues etc. to aid the court in setting hearings to avoid delays. She will also assist Judge Sloan with complex juvenile cases.

In that Hendry County is smaller and has fewer resources than the other counties currently employing case management, the procedures will be slightly different to meet-the-needs there.

Teen Court cont. from pg. 3

having to go through the formal criminal justice system. Ms. Salmon has reached out through community organizations and the local schools to recruit volunteers - adults and teens - to participate in the program. To date seventeen youth have gone through the program and 22 individuals -eight adults and fourteen youth- have volunteered.

Her work has paid off and not just in the success of the program but in the interest it has generated. Interest that resulted in the Labelle High School introducing a class entitled "Comprehensive Law Studies & Court Internship". The class examines components and processes associated with the American legal system. A requirement of the class is that students participate in the Teen Court Program to experience first hand the American judicial system and see how their involvement, just like any citizen's involvement, is crucial to its functioning.

The new class will commence in the fall term 2010. This should provide a steady flow of teens to sit on the jury or act as prosecutors, defense counsel, bailiffs and clerks.



Tips for Making the Perfect Record

by Brenda Giessman



Here in the 20th Judicial Circuit we use a combination of stenographic court reporters and a digital electronic system to record due process proceedings. Electronic Court Reporting (ECR) has three offices in our five-county circuit that

monitor 25-54 rooms per day, logging around 20,000 hours of proceedings each year. Digital Court Reporters monitor from one to four rooms each, depending on the type of proceeding, from one of our three control rooms. Because the reporters are not seated in the courtrooms there may be a delay in letting the Court know when there are issues with a recording, so Electronic Court Reporting would like to offer these tips for making the perfect record and kindly ask for assistance in making this happen.

- Each time a case is called before the Court the full name and case number should be stated.
- Everyone must speak clearly and one at a time ***into*** a microphone; speakers who walk around are not heard clearly on the recording.
- Attendees not involved in the case before the Court but sitting near a microphone should remain quiet so their conversations are not recorded over the judge, attorney, witness or defendant.
- When conversing near a microphone about matters unrelated to the case before the court, the mute button should be used to avoid the conversation being recorded into the record.
- Each speaker must state his/her name each time he/she speaks; otherwise reporters and transcribers do not know to whom the voice belongs.
- Names should be spelled so the record is correct when transcribed.
- The defendant should be reminded to speak up so his or her answers are recorded clearly.
- Interpreters should speak into the microphone only when translating the defendant's responses;

otherwise the judge and counsel cannot be heard over the interpreter.

- To prevent gaps in the record, when white noise is used during sidebar conferences, participants should speak in a normal tone of voice and not a whisper, so the conversation may be heard over the white noise.

Some actions may seem innocuous but actually cause interferences in a recording (and are deafening to a digital court reporter). When these things do occur, they are the only thing that can be heard resulting in either a partial record or no record. They are:

- Tapping or drumming fingers on the tables;
- Coughing or sneezing at the microphone;
- Passing papers over a microphone, including the sidebar microphone;
- People chatting near the microphone when they are ***not*** involved in the case at the bench;
- Cell doors being closed; bailiffs should be reminded to close the door gently if possible.

The best and most accurate record possible can be made when we all work together. Your digital court reporters thank you for helping them achieve this goal.

Circuit Times Newsletter

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The Human Resource FYI

Paperless Recruiting New to the 20th

by Sharon Suhar

The Administrative Office of the Courts in the 20th Judicial Circuit is constantly looking for ways to better serve the citizens, the judiciary, and our employees. Therefore, we are pleased to announce that as of March 2010 our position vacancies and promotional opportunities have been advertised using a product created by NeoGov. NeoGov is a company that provides software for a paperless recruiting process specifically for public sector agencies.

Persons interested in applying for positions will be able to access this system through our court website, www.ca.cjis20.org, and also through our intranet site, <http://caintra>, for internal applicants. Creating an account and an application is quick and easy. The system will store applications securely making updating applications and applying for future vacancies a snap. Employees and applicants may set up an account in the system now and prepare an electronic application for future use by going to https://www.governmentjobs.com.js_login.cfm.

Applying for vacancies from any computer with internet access will be easy and convenient once the account and application are created.



HR Offering an Array of Workshops

The Human Resources Department for the 20th Judicial Circuit is offering several workshops in the coming months. Some workshops will enhance workplace knowledge; others are designed to help staff manage their physical well being.

Beginning in May the “Healthy at Work” series of workshops will be presented by Dr. Charles K. Bens. Dr. Bens has his PhD in nutrition and will discuss food as something much more than the next meal or snack, but how it is a medicine and how it feeds the brain. Also covered, will be strategies for improving digestive health and weight management.

In June the “Healthy at Work” series continues and is joined by three workshops regarding leadership, ethics and stress management. Specifically, “The Art of being the Boss...Preparing to Take the Lead” and “Build an Award Winning Team” are offered to all Division and Department Managers, Supervisors and designated Lead positions. “Ethics and Stress Management”, the final workshop, is open to all Administrative Office of the Court’s employees.

For more information regarding these workshops contact Dawn Cicchesi at 239-533-1705 or Manny Thomas at 239-533-1756.

To register for any of the workshops go to <http://caintra>

Seating is limited, 25 seats per workshop.

For more information about the Twentieth Circuit visit our website at www.ca.cjis20.org