



EQUAL TIMES

BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It's September, which means a lot of things, including back to school, Labor Day, fall (in theory, not necessarily reflected in the temperatures!), end of summer and summer vacations, and my personal favorite, start of college football season! For the Bexar County Women's Bar, September means the final push to make our October 13th Autumn Affair the best yet, and kick-off of our annual mentor/mentee program with St. Mary's University School of Law.



Laura C. Mason

A variety of organizations and governmental authorities have designated September as standing for a number of causes. I've printed a few below that I located in a quick search: ¹

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Month
 - Be Kind To Editors and Writers Month
 - Childrens' Good Manners Month
 - College Savings Month
 - Fall Hat Month
 - Library Card Sign-up Month
 - (World) Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month
 - National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month
 - National Chicken Month
 - National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15)
 - National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (Gov't)
 - National Prime Beef Month
 - National Sickle Cell Month
 - National Piano Month
 - National Preparedness Month
 - National Rice Month
 - National Skin Care Awareness Month
 - Reunion Planning Month
- (con'd on p. 6)

¹<http://womeninbusiness.about.com/od/diversityeventcalendars/a/nat-month-sept.htm>

SEPTEMBER 2011

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Suzanne Oliva



Gaylia Brunson

Autumn Affair Proceeds Recipient

By Suzanne Oliva & Gaylia Brunson

Autumn Affair is next month! This year's signature fundraising event will take place October 13, 2011 in the beautiful courtyard of the Witte Museum. Proceeds from "New York Fashion Week," this year's themed event, will benefit the Center for Family Relations, a.k.a. Kid's Exchange. Please consider becoming a sponsor or purchasing a ticket in order to make sure that you don't miss all the excitement!

In addition to sending out our "Save the Date" to the San Antonio legal community, we are actively soliciting sponsors and donations for our auction and raffle. Sponsorships are available for \$2,000 or \$1,200. We are also reaching out to you, our members, to help stock our auction and raffle tables with awesome items. We are seeking any donated items, large or small, but have a particular need for the following:

- Bottles of wine or gift baskets
- Items or gift cards for children and babies, including books, toys, bicycles, Sea World, Fiesta Texas, or San Antonio Zoo tickets, etc.
- Spurs/sports tickets or sports memorabilia
- Gift cards for spa treatments, beauty items or restaurants
- Jewelry, purses, scarves, and other accessories
- Any and all travel items, including hotel or air travel vouchers or gift certificates, your vacation home or timeshare, luggage, etc.

If you would like to donate or have any questions about potential raffle or auction items, please contact Suzanne Oliva at oliva@satx.rr.com or Gaylia Brunson at gayliabrunson@gmail.com or come visit us at our next planning meeting:

**September Autumn Affair Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2011, Noon to 1:00 p.m.**

Cox Smith, Conf. Room 18F

Lunch Served

RSVP to Suzanne Oliva at oliva@satx.rr.com

We look forward to seeing you at the Witte Museum on October 13th!

September Luncheon

Please join us for our September 6th luncheon at Club Giraud. We are pleased to present Meg Barron, Executive Director of the Center for Family Relations, also known as San Antonio Kids Exchange. The Center for Family Relations is this year's beneficiary of the Bexar County Women's Bar Association's Autumn Affair. The Center provides a venue and related services for supervised parental visits as well as monitored child exchanges between separated or divorced parents. Come hear Ms. Barron tell us more about what this organization does and the great impact it has in our community. Please RSVP by Thursday, September 1st. You may RSVP on the website or by emailing Maggie Giltner at mgiltner@prdg.com or kwalhall@prdg.com.

Next month's luncheon will be on Wednesday, October 5, 2011 when we welcome back former Texas Supreme Court Justice Scott Brister. Justice Brister will provide us with an update on this year's significant opinions by the Texas Supreme Court. Justice Brister always draws a large crowd, so be sure to RSVP early.

Center for Family Relations aka San Antonio Kids Exchange

By Meg Barron

In the midst of the adult world of parental conflict between divorcing, separating, and never married parents, children are all too often the silent victims. Many times, parents in these situations are too entrenched in conflict and too consumed emotionally to recognize that the emotional and sometimes physical, well being of the child may be in jeopardy. Many children feel responsible for their parent's divorce. When children hear and see their parents insult, give dirty looks, threaten and scream at each other, they bear the brunt of those attacks. Even when parents believe that they are not putting the children in the middle, children hear the arguing and experience the lack of affection between parents and therefore feel threatened. Their security is at stake. This creates internal emotional instability. Working in collaboration with the local courts, community agencies, and local police, the Center for Family Relations, aka San Antonio Kids Exchange, serves as a shield to protect our communities most precious asset – our children.

The Center is a non-profit organization, founded in 1997, dedicated to helping children and parents trapped in family conflict. Through supervised visitation, monitored exchange services, and educational programs, the Center makes it possible for children to develop healthy and appropriate relationships with both of their parents while keeping children out of the middle of parental conflict. Not only does the Center provide immediate services which protect children by taking parents out of direct contact with each other, but additionally, our trained staff work with parents to reduce conflict, awaken parents to the impact of their actions on their children, develop new skills, and change behaviors. The Center is motivated by research demonstrating that children who have a stable and consistent relationship with both parents have better psychological and emotional health, financial stability and overall well being.

The Center's programs are working, and our parents are learning the importance of putting their children first in divorce situations. Parents at the Center report a decrease in amount of conflict observed by their children, a decrease in their ex-partner's verbal aggression, a significant reduction in police and court involvement, and non-residential parents experience a significant increase in parenting time with their children. Supervised visitation and exchange programs reduce anxiety in children and parents, diminish or eliminate parental contact regarding child visitation and related issues, and allow families to see that there is another way to live. The Center for Family Relations served over 3,600 children and parents per year. The Center is located at 1818 San Pedro. For more information about the Center and its programs, please visit www.centerforfamilyrelations.org.

We're rolling out the red carpet for...

THE BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR FOUNDATION

AUTUMN AFFAIR

Save the date
6 P.M.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2011
WITTE MUSEUM

BENEFITTING CENTER FOR FAMILY RELATIONS
(A.K.A. SAN ANTONIO KIDS EXCHANGE)

Justice Rebecca Simmons

By Beverly Smith

**SPOTLIGHT
ON**



A pillar in our community as well as in our Judiciary, Justice Simmons so graciously gave me this exclusive interview to kick off our very own Equal Times “Spot Light” column.

The interview topics I chose were not the usual run of the mill interview questions posed to a Justice of a Court of Appeals. Instead, I opted for more personal topics that would allow us a peek beyond the Black Robe of this very AMAZING Justice! Here we go...

BS: Do you have favorite TV shows

RS: I do. First understand that I have a teenage son, so we’re big “Doctor Who” fans. I got hooked on Doctor Who when I studied in England back in the 80’s. So Doctor Who is back and we watch the new episodes. I also like other BBC period pieces like Downton Abbey, and any of the nature shows.

BS: What kind of music do you all listen to?

RS: We listen to a lot of different types of music because my son switches from pop to country and my husband and I like jazz and world music. Some of my favorite artists include the groups Gypsy Kings and Pink Martini.

BS: What about books, do have a favorite book?

RS: OK, I will reveal to you that the 4th Court has a monthly book club. So about once a month various members of the court and staff get together and we discuss a designated book over lunch. Some of the books we read include: *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel, *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, and *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* by Gregory Maguire. For a scary page turner, the book *The Passage* by Justin Cronin is very intense.

BS: I have seen you on the runway at the Autumn Affair event and you looked fantastic, so what kind of style do you have going on behind the robe?

RS: I am not sure I have a style, but the clothes we get to model at the Autumn Affair are amazing thanks to Julian Gold. For work, I try to dress professionally but with a modern flare with something a little more updated than just your standard suit. Snazzy shoes can really make an outfit. Now if you catch me away from work - going to the store or at home you probably wouldn’t recognize me because I’m usually in sweats or jeans and a t-shirt or something very casual.

BS: What are you doing to combat this good ole Texas summer heat?

RS: Doing a little more swimming and running earlier and earlier.

BS: Oh so you’re a runner? Wow, any marathon under your belt?

RS: Yes. I ran one marathon in San Diego and lots of half marathons in San Antonio and Austin but it is hard to brag because I run during the week with someone who has completed over 720 marathons. Just puts me to shame.
(con’d on next page)

Spotlight on Justice Simmons (con'd)

BS: How about giving us all a quick helpful tip based on what you see from your daily courthouse activities.

RS: Well I would encourage everyone to take a moment during the day to get up and stretch. Maybe take a deep breath and try to think about the big picture instead of every little thing you have to get done. Think positive and be thankful for the clients, staff and family that support you.

RS: I sometimes get up and go downstairs and get a coke or go outside and walk down the river when I am frustrated working on a case. I put the case aside and focus on being thankful for the wonderful job I have and the great staff that supports the court. Tinkerbelle was right on when she told Peter Pan to think positive thoughts in order to fly.

BS: Justice Simmons - please share with us ... What is one thing that you do not fancy?

RS: OK, let's see ... I do not fancy lawyers who denigrate their fellow lawyers and the judiciary. Constructive criticism is ok, but personal attacks impact the entire judicial system. What client would trust the court system after their lawyer described opposing counsel as a thief and the judge as a bribe-taking idiot? That type of behavior does not promote the resolution of problems or confidence in the system.

BS: Why do you think it is important for us to communicate with the public and our community about the women's bar?

RS: I think it is important for the community to know how hard the members work to improve our legal community. Your members serve as role models not only to other women lawyers but also to the young women who are looking for careers and who are interested in the law.

BS: Justice Simmons I see you out at various events supporting our legal community. Do you have any women's bar events that you partake in?

RS: I will show my age; I have participated in events sponsored by the Bexar County Women's Bar Association since the inception of the group. I really enjoy going to the BCWBA Luncheons. I enjoyed the Bench Brunch and auction, and I am an even bigger supporter of the Autumn Affair. You may even catch me out on the runway as a fashion model for this year's event.

BS: Did you know the women's bar has a Mentor/Mentee program also?

RS: Oh yes, it has a great one. In fact, I am hosting the next mentor/mentee social event at my house on September 29th. I'll be doing some big time cleaning up before the event (smile). It is great fun to meet all the new and eager law students.

BS: Justice Simmons do you have a pet?

RS: Yes, we have three pets. My beautiful golden retriever's name is Aslan. My daughter's dog is Charlie, a strange mix of a dog that continues to live with us while my daughter is in college. Then there is our cat Tidbit that we saved from coyotes.

(con'd on p. 8)



Victoria Marie S. Bongat
President, Women's Law
Association

2011-2012 WLA Executive
Board, from left to right:
Elizabeth Gutierrez,
Jennifer Zarka,
Alison Williams,
Victoria Marie S. Bongat,
Alyse Haugen &
Kristen Hunger.

Women's Law Association Update

By Victoria Marie S. Bongat

The new school year has begun at St. Mary's University School of Law, and the Women's Law Association (WLA) Executive Board has been hard at work planning for a wonderful year! The 2011-2012 executive board is: Victoria Marie S. Bongat (president), Jennifer Zarka (vice president), Alison Williams (president-elect), Kristen Hunter (secretary), Alyse Haugen (treasurer) and Elizabeth Gutierrez (alumni relations chair).

Our first order of business was to list our goals for the year. Some topics we discussed were membership, mentor-mentee, and our annual silent auction. We hope to increase the number of active members, nurture and strengthen relationships between practicing attorneys and law students, and raise more money during the silent auction than we have in the past. One thing that may entice students to join the WLA, and increase our membership numbers are the t-shirts. This year, the shirts are more flattering—no longer the boxy style of past years. The color is an eye-catching teal, and the saying on the back is, "Because well-behaved women rarely make history."

This fall, we plan to have general meetings on Mondays once a month from 12 to 1 p.m. for day students and 5 to 6 p.m. to accommodate evening students and any day students unavailable for our noon meeting. We kicked off the year by hosting a Chips and Salsa Meet and Greet in the law courtyard on the Friday of the first week of school. Attendees were

enthusiastic about joining the organization and experiencing the upcoming year's events.



Upcoming Events: Docket Call (9/15), First General Meeting (9/26), Mentor-Mentee Event with BCWBA (9/29), Wine and Wit (10/14), Second General Meeting (10/24), Annual Silent Auction for Charity (11/3), Social and Service (11/11-11/12).

President's Column (con'd from p. 1)

- Self Improvement Month
- Shameless Promotion Month
- Reunion Planning Month
- Self Improvement Month
- Shameless Promotion Month
- Sports and Home Eye Health & Safety Month
- Update Your Resume Month
- World Animal Remembrance Month

I located even more when searching on the Internet. We could spend the whole month recognizing and acting on these causes and still not have enough time to cover them all! Clearly, September means different things to different people. For me, I think I'll focus on National Piano Month, since that enables me to enjoy something I already do. I hope your September is a happy and productive month, for whatever focus you choose!

Community Service Column

By Hella Scheuerman

“Will you marrow me?” One of San Antonio’s newest charities is Marrow Match. When someone asks “Will you marrow me?”, they are asking you “Will you save my life?”

Marrow Match is a non-profit organization devoted to growing the national donor registry of volunteer donors. Jason Cox, a San Antonio native and founder of marrow match, became a marrow recipient after his diagnosis with aplastic anemia, at the age of 9. Aplastic anemia is a condition in which bone marrow does not produce enough new blood cells for the body to sustain itself. Cox’s life was saved when the bone marrow match came from his brother. He is now a local San Antonio athlete, actor and model.

There is an enormous search for bone marrow donors to save the lives of people that have been diagnosed with leukemia and other life threatening illnesses. Over 6000 people daily search the national marrow donor registry of volunteer donors for a match. There are many that are not able to find a viable match from a sibling. Those that cannot find a match within the family, are left with no other choice than to search the national registry.

The need for donors, especially of mixed heritages and ethnic minorities like Cox, led Cox to create Marrow Match in 2007. Cox’s mother is of Latino descent. At the age of 33, Cox educates the public about bone marrow donation. He strives to raise awareness about the need for people to join the national Be The Match Registry. Cox is extremely passionate about Marrow Match. Many local businesses have held events in support of Marrow Match. To learn more about bone marrow donation or the next marrow match event, please visit themarrowsmatch.com.

2011 BCWBF Autumn Affair Benefiting Center for Family Relations (also known as San Antonio Kids Exchange)

SPONSORS (as of Friday, September 02, 2011)

SPOTLIGHT

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Law Alumni Association

If you would like to become a sponsor for this year’s Autumn Affair, please contact Monica Lerma at mjlerma@sr-llp.com or 210.447.8033.

Spotlight on Justice Simmons (con'd)

BS: What kind of work did you do as a young lawyer, prior to becoming a judge?

RS: As a young lawyer I began my career as a briefing attorney for the Texas Supreme Court. I came to San Antonio in 1983 and became a shareholder at Cox Smith doing commercial litigation. In 1992, I moved to Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld where my practice focused on intellectual property and antitrust litigation before becoming a district court judge in 2003, and an appellate judge in 2005.

BS: What is one thing that you really enjoy?

RS: I really enjoy my family. My husband and I have been married 28 years and we have a 16 year old son, Patrick, at home. Although my older daughter, Rachael, is teaching in Japan and my younger daughter, Sarah, is studying in Argentina, we visit a lot using Skype. I also really enjoy working at the Fourth Court of Appeals because you have time to think about the law and the people it serves. I have good colleagues and a very supportive staff.

BS: It was a pleasure getting to interview Justice Rebecca Simmons. She is such an asset to our profession. She really walks the walk, and not just on the red carpeted runway at the Autumn Affair. I think I will write Piers Morgan and tell him I know just how he felt when he landed that first interview of Oprah after she retired . . . very lucky to have met such a dynamic woman! To learn more about Justice Rebecca Simmons go online to: http://www.4thcoa.courts.state.tx.us/court/justice_rsimmons.asp.



Representing Unaccompanied Immigrant Children

Each year, thousands of unaccompanied children reach the Texas border after fleeing abuse, neglect or persecution in their home countries. Many of these children are eligible for a number of different types of immigration relief. Without adequate representation, however, these children are unable to navigate the complicated immigration system and face almost certain deportation to the situations from which they fled.

Friday, September 16, 2011

Registration: 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Program: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch will be provided

Location

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
300 Convent Street, Suite 1600
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Complimentary validated parking is available in the parking garage attached to the building at the corner of Convent Street and N. St. Mary's Street

Registration

Please respond by Friday, September 9, 2011

E-mail: jstief@akingump.com

Seating is limited

ProBAR, RAICES and Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP invite you to attend a free CLE training session to learn the basic skills necessary for representing unaccompanied children in immigration and state courts.

Sponsored by:



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ProBar is an Accredited Sponsor for the State Bar of Texas. This course will offer 3.0 CLE credits.



Oxbow Advisors

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (July 1, 2011)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Antonio Advisor Selected For New York Board

Charlotte P. Yochem, J.D. has been appointed Financial Adviser to the Board of Directors of the Alumnae Association of Vassar College (AAVC). Ms. Yochem, a 1985 graduate of Vassar College, will serve as the chief financial officer of AAVC through June 2015.

Together with the President and Executive Director of AAVC, Ms. Yochem is responsible for coordinating financial issues with the Vassar College Finance Office. Ms. Yochem also has served Vassar College as a Club President and AAVC Nominating Committee member. Vassar College is in Poughkeepsie, New York.

In addition to serving her alma mater, Ms. Yochem has volunteered extensively in Texas through organizations such as the Coastal Bend Women Lawyers Association and the Junior League.

A Senior Investment Manager with Oxbow Advisors in San Antonio, Texas and its predecessor firm Herndon Plant Oakley, Ms. Yochem manages investment portfolios for individuals and families.

Contact: Charlotte P. Yochem

Email: CharlotteYochem@OxbowAdv.com

Phone: 877-604-5707

For further information: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/CharlotteYochemOxbowAdvisors>

Save the Date 2011 BCWBA Holiday Luncheon

Put it on your calendar now so you don't miss out on our annual holiday luncheon! This year's fun-filled holiday luncheon will be at the Hotel Contessa on Friday, December 9, 2011. We hope you'll join us for holiday cheer, a delicious lunch, special presentations, and great prizes. More details to follow from this year's luncheon chairs, Lisa Alcantar and Maggie Giltner.