

# NCBC Impact Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 4

June 1, 2010



## President's Message by Mark Hatcher

This being my last President's Message, I'd like to use the occasion to comment on the status of NCBC and to briefly convey my sentiments as the organization moves into its thirty-first year.

As your trade association, NCBC continues to fulfill its mission of Leadership, Advocacy and Education, and it is discharging its duties adhering to high ethical standards. There is money in the bank, and support and membership is as strong as it's ever been. After 30 years,

NCBC continues to be an organization I think we can all be proud to be a part of.

Any organization is only as good as the people associated with it, and NCBC has terrific members and volunteers. Speaking just for the past and present volunteer board members with whom I've worked very closely these past two years (including Business Manager, Historian, and Impact Editor), I can tell you they have exceeded every expectation and put forth effort as though they're compensated employees (which, of course, they're not!). I thank them. I also thank all of you for your continued support of NCBC and for the opportunity to have served as your president. I sign off with the unwavering confidence that NCBC will see even greater prosperity under the leadership of next-president Ken Hirz.

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## Make plans to attend the 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



**NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE  
OF BANKRUPTCY  
CLERKS**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
JUNE 29–JULY 2, 2010**

Visit the updated conference website for more information, including the latest conference newsletter.

[www.pawb.uscourts.gov/ncbc](http://www.pawb.uscourts.gov/ncbc)

**PITTSBURGH 2010**

**“THE CITY OF BRIDGES”**



***Building a bridge  
to the future***



## NCBC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### A LONG JOURNEY HOME by Al Lugano



I have been a member of NCBC since 2008 and am still actively serving in the Air National Guard as a JAG Paralegal with the rank of Tech. Sergeant. I have 24 years of service in the military and since being re-hired by the court have had a couple extended deployments.

My journey with the Delaware Bankruptcy Court started in January 1996 when I was appointed as a case administrator. Back in 1985, my career with the United States Air Force and the Delaware Air National Guard began. At that time I had no idea the two worlds would merge at one point in the future and set my course in life for a long time to come.

I always knew I wanted to have a career in both the law and the military and in 1997, the two worlds met when I asked Chief Judge Helen S. Balick for her recommendation to join the United States Air Force Judge Advocate Corp. With her recommendation and the personal approval of the Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force, my journey began.

My position with the court was a Chapter 11 case administrator. The court was very busy and needed my assistance, but I had a responsibility to my country as well and was required to go on active duty to attend the Air Force JAG School. When I returned, after three months, I had a meeting with the Clerk of Court, David Bird to discuss my position at the court. He felt I would benefit from private practice experience. However he made it known that if I ever wanted to come back to the court, I would be welcomed.

Hired as a bankruptcy paralegal in the fall of 2000, I joined a local law firm and there I got my experience in bankruptcy from a different perspective. In March 2002, I switched law firms and handled mega chapter 11 cases completely from the day of filing until the day of their final decree. It was at this law firm that I received a call from the Pentagon that my country needed me 7,000 miles away for a five month tour of duty.

Arriving in Kuwait on September 12, 2005, a sunny 121 degree day, my first task involved unloading the commercial airliner. I traveled by bus for over an hour to Ali Al Salem Air Base, the place I would call home during my time overseas. It was otherwise known as "The Rock" because the Air Force was stationed on top of a large hill. My duties included legal assistance such as wills, power of attorneys, and general legal advice. Other duties were Military Justice matters, command-driven investigations, and other various assignments. The JAG is responsible for all legal matters of the entire Air Force personnel at the camp, which was a very interesting and important assignment. Camp Bucca was a detainment center, loaded with seven thousand prisoners. I made sure that the handling of the detainees was being done in a professional manner. We traveled to and from Camp Bucca each day in a combat convoy in armored Humvees.

The great day finally came when I arrived back home on January 21, 2006, and shortly thereafter I returned to my job at the law firm. In the time I was gone, bankruptcy filings had decreased remarkably. In 2007 the Delaware Bankruptcy Court was advertising for an Electronic Court Recorder Operator position and I applied for the job. When I arrived for my interview, I was still dressed in my uniform from having been on active duty. Mr. Bird offered me the job and I said yes immediately. Looking back, it seems as if I was destined to be back home in the bankruptcy court.

**MORE NEWS FROM Lora Johnson in the Third Circuit** — The Court, in order to keep up with the high level of filings, has recently hired two additional permanent Case Administrators, five temporary Generalists and a Policy and Research Analyst. The current job market has provided an unusual high level of talented individuals and job applicants.

From the  
Desk Of  
Celia Strickler

# MEMO

- I'm still looking for Purchase Orders from a bunch of courts. Everyone needs to pay for their extras by June 10th to give me a chance to record it before I leave for PA. Here's a list (I hope it's complete, but it may not be) of the courts from which I still haven't received Purchase Orders or checks — AL, AZ, FLS, ID, ILS, KYW, ME, MIE, MN, MT, NE, NV, NYW, NCM, ND, RI, TNM, UT, WIE, WIW.
- After June 18, please do not send me anything by any method other than US mail. Mail will be held, forwarded, etc., but FedEx or UPS or others will be left at my vacant front door to sit there all summer.
- Also, if you are trying to get into Member Clicks by email address and you know you are a member, it's probably because you have a home email address on file rather than a court address. Please try both and then if you still can't get in, please send me an email to get your login id and password -- **PLEASE** don't create a new profile on the system.

THANKS !!!



## DRIVE WITH METLIFE AND THE NCBC!

by Kathy Grzybowski

The NCBC now offers its members access to a unique insurance savings program from MetLife Auto & Home® through Federal First.

Starting May, 2010 you could now get special group discounts and benefits on auto and home insurance. Many other insurance policies will be available including renter's, condo, RV, and boat. Plus, you'll be able to choose from easy and convenient payment options including bank account deduction. You'll have the opportunity to compare the benefits and savings of this program with your current insurance. For rates or more details **call 1 800 GET-MET 8.**

Visit the Auto and Homeowners Insurance webpage on the Federal First website at:

[http://federalfirst.com/benefits/auto\\_home.php](http://federalfirst.com/benefits/auto_home.php)



## Calling All Scribes! By Teresa Underwood

NCBC Peer2Peer Break-Out sessions are exciting venues used by Bankruptcy clerks to share valuable ideas about court-specific processes, policies, procedures and technology. To ensure that each group's discussion points and innovative ideas can be referenced after the 2010 Conference, the NCBC is calling for volunteer scribes to record and prepare notes that will be posted to the NCBC website. If you would like to volunteer as a scribe for your discussion group, please contact Teresa Underwood via email @ [Teresa\\_Underwood@ohnb.uscourts.gov](mailto:Teresa_Underwood@ohnb.uscourts.gov) or by telephone at (216) 615-4332 by June 11, 2010.



## Cultivating Our Peer Culture with ATCOP 2010 by Alyson Johnson

This year's biennial Automation Trainers' Community of Practice Conference took place May 11-13 in San Antonio and brought together training professionals from all courts and corners of our judicial community, from District, Bankruptcy, Appellate, Probation/Pre-Trial Services, Federal Claims and International Trade courts, spanning distances as far as the District of Guam. Circuit representatives along with FJC and AO/SDSD professionals were on hand as well for a conference rich with informative sessions and attended by approximately 300 trainers.

The conference opened with an in-person webinar demo and presentation by Kevin Siegel, a superstar in the world of software training and known name to all Captivate users. SDSD superstars in their own right, Lou Gil and John Leonard were frequently on hand as facilitators throughout the events of the three-day conference. Workshops covering a myriad of topics ran concurrent with hands-on workshops at the training center, covering topics such as Captivate, Adobe, Lotus Notes, Excel, and Judge's training. Some of the workshops, facilitated and instructed by familiar names to NCBC like Stephanie Briscoe, Lou Gil, Jim Buchanan, and Richard Marshall, covered training-related subjects like training tools, strategies for success, needs assessment, and programs trainers can use to bolster their methods.

There was also a get-together for each circuit on the final day, during which each circuit's attendees had the opportunity to meet and discuss the successes (and challenges) they've had in their scope as trainers – a valuable opportunity to network with other professionals within the same circuit.

For me, one of the most beneficial portions was the “unconference” on the second day. Participants had the opportunity to propose their own topics for sessions, then groups broke out and met to discuss topics. Sessions attended included discussions on how agencies assess training needs, and how to move training of external users to an electronic-based system. It was a fantastic chance to learn from what other courts are doing and make contacts with other court professionals who can offer words of experience and advice.

If you have interest in joining the ATCOP community, visit their site at <http://at.cop.ao.dcn/> It's important for courts to support membership and encourage attendance at this AO-funded biennial event, where information sharing is key.

## 2010 NCBC Conference: Renaissance Expedition Update by Kathy Grzybowski

What do the following have in common?

- Utah Bankruptcy Court
- Bankruptcy Best Practices Group (BMAP)
- California Southern Bankruptcy Court
- Administrative Offices of the U.S. Courts, Office of Human Resources, Benefits Division
- Arizona Bankruptcy Court
- The Federal Judicial Center



- Maryland Bankruptcy Court
- NCBC IMPACT Editorial Team
- Wisconsin Western Bankruptcy Court
- NCBC Peer to Peer Supervisor Group
- Ohio Northern Bankruptcy Court
- Wisconsin Eastern Bankruptcy Court
- Florida Middle Bankruptcy Court

These are the pioneers who will share their treasure trove of innovative offerings as you portage through the Renaissance Expedition during the 2010 NCBC Conference.

Take time to explore the exciting programs showcased during this year's increasingly popular information sharing plenary. Topics include: CHAP (Chambers Automation Program); Bankruptcy Best Practices; Job Applicant System; Website Customer Service Enhancements, vCal Courtroom Management System Support for Current Users; NCBC IMPACT; FJC In-Court Training Program Offerings; AO's Benefit Division Retirement Resources; Bankruptcy Supervisor Community of Practice; Streamlining the Attorney Registration Process; Tools: Work Distribution/Error Tracking; Financial From Home; Workplace Wellness, QCP (Quality Control Program), Judgment Book and Inventory Applications. The FJC will showcase their various eLearning and traditional education programs as well.

There will be plenty of time for you to see demos, to obtain information, and to network with the subject matter experts. Make sure your 2010 NCBC Conference experience includes the Renaissance Expedition, which will take place Thursday, July 1 from 10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. in the Pennsylvania Ballroom. Looking forward to seeing you there!

### NCBC IMPACT COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP !!! LOGO CONTEST ENDS SOON

Motto: Dedicated to the professional development of its members \* this wording remains the same \*

NCBC Impact Newsletter \* the name remains the same \*

Email [Yvonne\\_cheroke@nceb.uscourts.gov](mailto:Yvonne_cheroke@nceb.uscourts.gov) your logo submission by the deadline of June 11, 2010 in JPG format.

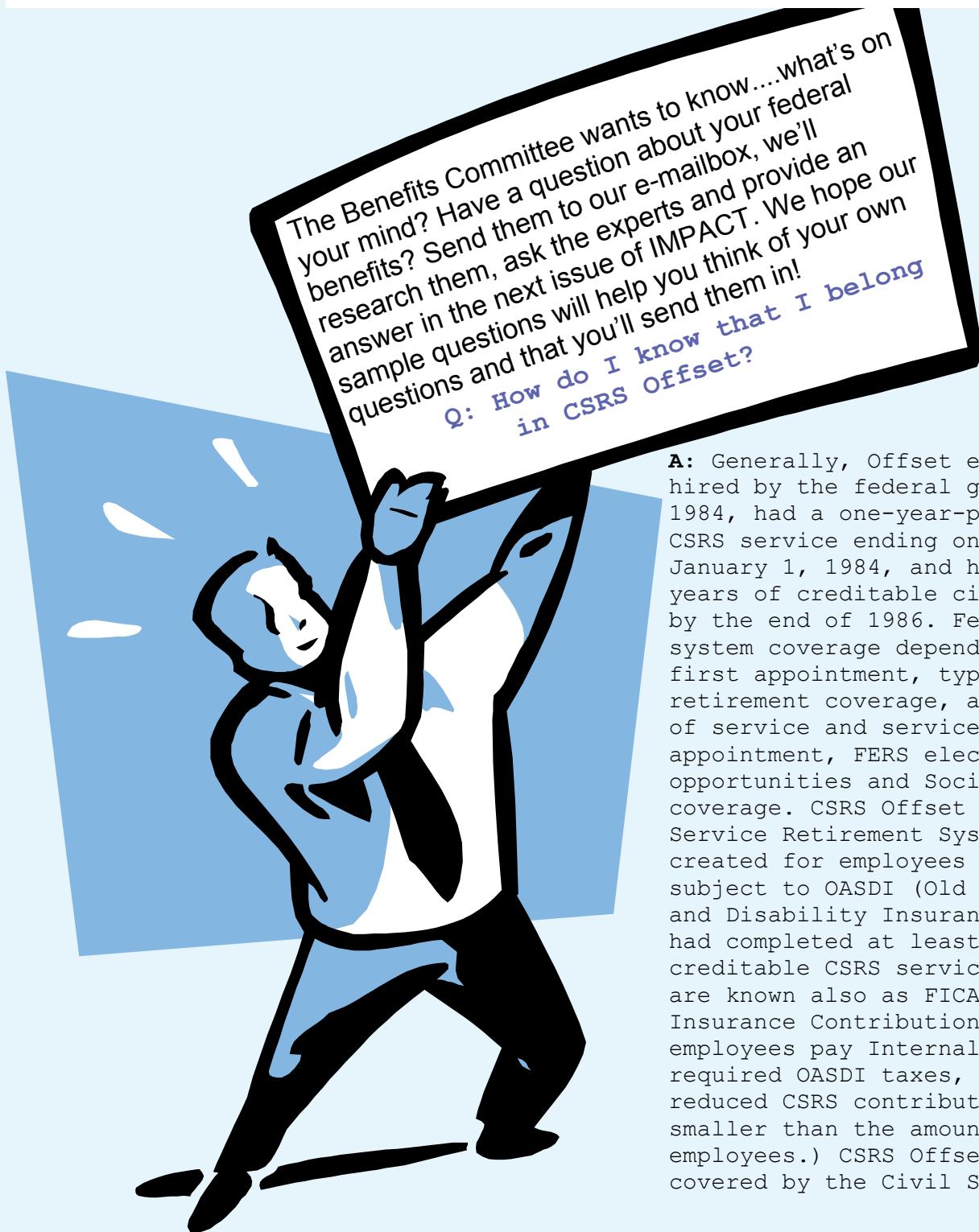
Logo dimensions for finished product would be no larger than 5" wide x 1.5" height

On or about June 15, We will send a survey letting members vote on the final logos submitted.

Winners have a choice of either a gift certificate from Amazon or cash paid through Paypal and will be announced at our table at the Renaissance Fair at the NCBC conference in Pittsburgh and in the NCBC Impact Newsletter.

First prize is \$50.00 and your logo on future newsletters to replace the current colored logo as shown at the top of Page 1. Second prize is \$25.00. Third prize is \$10.00.

*Winners announced at our table at the Renaissance Fair at the NCBC conference in Pittsburgh.*



The Benefits Committee wants to know....what's on your mind? Have a question about your federal benefits? Send them to our e-mailbox, we'll research them, ask the experts and provide an answer in the next issue of IMPACT. We hope our sample questions will help you think of your own questions and that you'll send them in!

*Q: How do I know that I belong  
in CSRS Offset?*

**A:** Generally, Offset employees were hired by the federal government before 1984, had a one-year-plus break in CSRS service ending on or after January 1, 1984, and had at least five years of creditable civilian service by the end of 1986. Federal retirement system coverage depends upon date of first appointment, type of prior retirement coverage, amount and dates of service and service breaks, type of appointment, FERS election opportunities and Social Security coverage. CSRS Offset is a CSRS (Civil Service Retirement System) version created for employees who became subject to OASDI (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) taxes and had completed at least five years of creditable CSRS service. OASDI taxes are known also as FICA taxes (Federal Insurance Contributions Act.) Offset employees pay Internal Revenue Code required OASDI taxes, and they pay a reduced CSRS contribution (an amount smaller than the amount paid by CSRS employees.) CSRS Offset employees are covered by the Civil Service

Retirement System and Social Security. If you are Offset, your retirement code will be Code C or E on your Notifications of Personnel Action. At retirement, Offset annuities are calculated exactly like CSRS annuities. However, if you become eligible for Social Security at age 62, your CSRS annuity is formula-reduced by the Social Security that you earned during your Offset service. Note that the annuity is reduced, not the Social Security. Any private sector employment for which you earned Social Security is not affected by this reduction or offset. For detailed Offset information, follow the J-Net links - Benefits-Retirement. Click on the key question: "Are you FERS, CSRS or CSRS Offset?". Another helpful link takes you to the free retirement planning calculator FedCalc to analyze your own retirement benefits. NCBC Benefits Committee WIWBML\_NCBC\_Benefits



**Editor's Note:** I hope that you have enjoyed this newsletter and that it has proven to be resourceful to you as a member of the NCBC. I would be grateful to receive your comments on the newsletter, both on its content as well as on its structure, and ways to improve it further. We are also welcoming ideas on how to improve membership. All suggestions are welcome.

Happy reading!

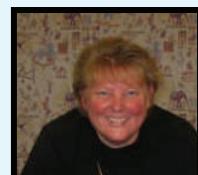
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## Correspondents:



**Alyson Johnson      Carol Thompson      Laura Whitehead      Leslie Taylor**

**All newsletter requests should be submitted to the editor.**

### Ask The Editorial Committee

The NCBC Impact Editorial Committee is here to serve you. Additionally, this is our 'always open' invitation to share your questions, comments, and suggestions for articles that will provide helpful information to NCBC members. Material should be emailed to [Yvonne\\_cherokee@nceb.uscourts.gov](mailto:Yvonne_cherokee@nceb.uscourts.gov).

*This is your newsletter -- let your voice be heard!*