



# NCBC IMPACT

*Dedicated to the professional development of its members*

Issue #3

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## President's Message

Lee Ann Bennett, NCBC President



Many of you are recently back from the 34<sup>th</sup> NCBC Annual Conference (Conference) held in St. Louis from July 15 – 18, 2014. From comments received from Conference attendees, I am pleased to report that the Conference was a great success. A total of 457 people attended this year's Conference. We missed those of you who were unable to attend and hope to see you next year in Atlanta. Congratulations and thanks are extended to the two host Clerks, Dana McWay (MOE) and Donna Beyersdorfer (ILS). Their success would not have been possible without the help and support of their staffs that did an excellent job in making us all feel welcomed. And a special thanks to Chief Judges Kathy A. Surratt-States (MOE) and Laura K. Grandy (ILS) for their delightful welcome to St. Louis. (Spoons will now take on a new meaning after watching their presentation!) Much of the success of the Conference was due to the excellent educational opportunities. The program featured two plenaries, 33 breakout sessions, Michigan State University courses, peer-to-peer lunch, and the information sharing program. We thank the Education Committee for their work in making this year's Conference a success. Edward (Eddy) Emmons was the chair of the Committee, and was joined by Dana McWay, Donna Beyersdorfer, Diana Durkee, Eileen Garrity, Kirsten Mahoney, Kris Botts, Rhonda Patterson, Richard Marshall, Yvonne Cherokee, Gary Streeting, Beth Pfister, Barry Lander, Donna Bard, Ann Iannarelli, Sandi Brask, and Joshua Wiker. We were blessed to have among our speakers Jill Sayenga, Deputy Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the Honorable Thad Collins, representing the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, John S. Cooke, Deputy Director of the Federal Judicial Center, Gary McCaffrey, Chief of the Operations Division in the Office of Court Services, and Robert (Bob) Lowney, Chief of the Programs Division in the Office of Court Services. I would also like to thank the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the Federal Judicial Center, the Bankruptcy Noticing Center, SDSD, Gallagher Benefit Services, fedAdvantage, and staff from various courts for providing training at this year's Conference. This Conference wrap-up would not be complete without recognizing the 10-year partnership with Michigan State University which was celebrated with a special reception attended by graduates, current students, clerks, chief deputies, and NCBC Board members. The reception was hosted by Michigan State University and NCBC. A very special thank you to Dr. Maureen Conner for identifying the need for this program over 10 years ago. I would also like to recognize the outgoing NCBC Board members, Eddy Emmons and Sharon Gardner, and thank them for their service on the Board. I would also like to welcome the new Board members, Mona Sparks (KYE) and Sabrina Palacio-Garcia (CAC). In addition, congratulations to Regina Thomas on being elected President Elect and Ken Hirz on being elected Treasurer.

## 2014 Publication Dates

February 8

May 2

August 1

November 7

Articles are due to the editor by the  
15th of the month preceding  
publication

[laura.whitehead@nceb.uscourts.gov](mailto:laura.whitehead@nceb.uscourts.gov)

## Barry Lander Receives Ralph H. Kelley Outstanding Achievement Award

The Ralph H. Kelley Outstanding Achievement Award can be awarded to that member of NCBC who best exemplifies outstanding achievement in the spirit and manner exemplified by Judge Ralph H. Kelley. This award has only been presented four times in the past (Brenda Argoe, 2005, Wayne Wolfe, 2007, Richard Heltzel, 2010, and Glen K. Palman, 2011). This award is voted on by the Board of Governors. At this year's Conference, Barry K. Lander was presented with the Ralph H. Kelley Outstanding Achievement Award for his leadership in the NCBC for the past 25 years as well as his advocacy of the Bankruptcy Courts and its personnel. Congratulations, Barry.!





And the Award Goes To.....

**2014 NCBC Awards**

**Outstanding Service Awards**

NCBC Impact Newsletter Committee: Leslie Murin - District of Delaware; Pat Borokhovich - Northern District of Ohio; John Kohler - Central District of California; Heather Aslett - District of Utah; Dailin Pena - Southern District of Florida

Eddy Emmons - Northern District of California

Sharon Gardner - SDSD

Laura Whitehead - Eastern District of North Carolina

Celia Strickler - Outgoing NCBC Business Manager

Stan Sargol - BCAD - Retired

Fran Toler - FJC - Retired

Dr. Maureen Conner - MSU

Stephanie Hemmert - FJC

**Outstanding Achievement Awards**

Brent Layman - Middle District of North Carolina

Gary McCaffrey - AO

**Outstanding Public Service Awards**

Clerk's Office - District of Maryland

Shawna Belcher - District of Kansas

**Distinguished Service Awards**

Kristina Botts - Southern District of Iowa

Glenn Gregory - District of Utah

Laura Whitehead - Eastern District of North Carolina

**Distinguished Service Awards - Retired Clerk of Courts**

Gloria Franklin - Northern District of California

John Horner - Western District of Pennsylvania

Mark Sammons - District of Maryland

Mary W. Weibel - Southern District of Iowa

**Special Appreciation Awards**

Southern District of Illinois

Eastern District of Missouri

## Bulletin Board Page - Community Forum

By: Eileen Garrity



After co-facilitating the Case Administration Peer to Peer lunch at this year's conference in St. Louis, I thought it would be a great idea to add the Peer to Peer groups to the Bulletin Board page located on the NCBC Home page after you login. In the Case Admin lunch we hit on some topics that I thought all our members might be interested in discussing, so I thought about the Bulletin Board as a way to get the information shared. If you go into this page you will notice that I have already started the discussion by raising the main topic at this year's peer to peer lunch with the CA's which was TELEWORK. I have also included the following forums as well: Information Technology, Human Resources, Manager/Supervisors and Finance/Procurement.

**To get started:**

1. Log into the member section of the website.
2. Navigate to the Bulletin Board on the home page section.
3. Post a topic you want to discuss.
4. Respond to previous posts.
5. Share attachments when creating new posts.
6. Subscribe to topics of interest.
7. Favorite topics you want to read later.

<http://ncbc.memberclicks.net/>

## NCBC Staff Positions Application Period Open

By: Lee Ann Bennett - NCBC President

According to Section 7.3 of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Clerks' By-Laws, staff positions shall be reopened to the membership no less than every three years. The Website Administrator position and the Impact Editor position are now open. These positions serve without compensation. Those interested in applying for either the Website Administrator or the Impact Editor should submit a resume and narrative highlighting your qualifications and reasons you should be considered to me at [leeann\\_bennett@flmb.uscourts.gov](mailto:leeann_bennett@flmb.uscourts.gov) no later than 4:00 PM ET September 1, 2014. A summary of the positions is listed below. For additional information, please refer to the By-Laws on the NCBC website at <http://ncbc.memberclicks.net>.

### **Website Administrator**

This position manages the NCBC website through the MemberClicks software application. The major responsibilities of the Website Administrator are summarized as follows:

- Edits and updates the website to maintain current information.
- Appoints NCBC members to a website committee to assist in maintaining the website.
- Serves as a liaison between the Website Committee and the NCBC Board.
- Attends monthly Board meetings.
- Updates membership information and forms.
- Communicates directly with MemberClicks and acts as a resource to the Board to enhance communication to the membership.
- Assists the Membership Committee by creating membership forms and forwarding emails to members for membership renewal.
- Creates the annual conference registration form in cooperation with the local host court and the Board.
- Generates reports for the Board.
- Drafts custom reports from Memberclicks as requested by Board members.

### **Impact Editor**

This position is responsible for managing the NCBC newsletter, IMPACT. The major responsibilities of the Impact Editor can be summarized as follows:

- Authors and edits articles submitted for the IMPACT newsletter.
- Appoints NCBC members to an Editorial Committee to assist in gathering, reviewing and posting articles in the newsletter.
- Provides assignments to Editorial Committee members including writing *Impact* articles.
- Serves as a liaison between the Editorial Committee and the NCBC Board.
- Attends NCBC Board meetings (held by telephone conference)
- Attends NCBC mid-year meeting (held at the site of the conference)
- Attends NCBC Board meeting (held on the first and last day of the conference)
- Schedule meetings with the editorial committee to plan the newsletter
- Sends out the newsletter via MemberClicks
- Updates the NCBC website with the current issue, archiving the previous issue and uploading the President's Message
- Works with the Administrative Office of the United States Courts and the Federal Judicial Center to solicit articles of current interest to members.

NCBC Membership Committee

Regina Thomas, Chair



Spring was a very busy time for the Membership Committee as we undertook the inaugural Member Appreciation Week (MAW). Thanks to all of you, we grew the membership of the NCBC by leaps and bounds – and had lots of fun doing it. A very special thank you to **Dana McWay**, Clerk of Missouri Eastern (and co-host of the fabulous 2014 conference) for suggesting this great event. Another group in which Dana is involved had an appreciation activity and she thought our members would enjoy and appreciate something similar. She was right! Dana shared the concept with LeeAnn and the Board and the rest is history. Thank you, Dana!

In addition to the individual court raffles, there were four daily contests. Three of the four contest winners were announced via email on May 23, 2014. Those winners are:

Scavenger Hunt raffle winner - **Jeanette Stark** - North Carolina Middle  
Trivia Contest raffle winner - **Dania Muniz** – Florida Southern  
Word Scramble - **Janet Spiker** - District of Arizona

But who won the Innovation Contest? There were 14 great entries ranging from cost containment innovations to developing an effective COOP plan. After narrowing the entries to the top six, the MAW committee members voted **Som Many Greigg** of the Northern District of Iowa as the winner! Som suggested that the NCBC explore the possibility of showing plenary sessions, and some breakouts, via computer. While not providing the full conference experience, it would allow those unable to attend in person to share in the NCBC's educational mission. Great idea, Som!

All of our contest winners received a \$25 gift card and a one year membership in the NCBC. Thanks to the hundreds of NCBC members who participated in each of the daily contests! We received so many wonderful emails about the MAW activities - including this one from Som, our Innovation Contest Winner: "Thank you! It was such a wonderful surprise! I've really enjoyed and am proud of being a member of NCBC. Among having the greatest members, the NCBC also does so much from education, support, and advocating for its members. Thank you!" I couldn't say it better myself!

*Continued on page 7*

## NCBC Membership Committee

*Continued from page 6*

The committee had help from many of our circuit liaisons and local representatives and it was very much appreciated. I must give a shout out to Sabrina Palacio-Garcia, Eddy Emmons and Ken Gardner who were invaluable leading up to and during the MAW activities. Our goal was to “clean” the membership database as much as possible. After hundreds of emails and phone calls among the three of us – and many of you, too - I think we are very close to being where we need to be.

As a token of NCBC’s appreciation, all members received a drawstring back pack with the NCBC logo. I hope you enjoy yours as much as I do mine! I am happy to report that I saw of few people using their back packs at the conference in St. Louis.

Despite all our fun and success, there is more work to be done. We will continue to look for ways to communicate better and share all that the NCBC has to offer to its members. Thank you for your continued support! If you have any ideas, please let me know.

Thank you – Regina

[Regina\\_thomas@ganb.uscourts.gov](mailto:Regina_thomas@ganb.uscourts.gov)

Thank You!  
😊

## 2015 NCBC Conference - Atlanta



## 2014 MSU Noncredit Certificate Program Graduates

**Lynn Baldwin Bergmeyer** - Northern District of Ohio

Capstone Project: CM/ECF Attorney and Staff Training: From In-Person to On-Line

**Megan Moore** - Southern District of California

Capstone Project: Pro Se Handout

**Cheryl Rapp** - District of Arkansas

Capstone Project: Small Court of the Future; Examining Problems Facing Courts Today

**Susan Thurston** - District of Rhode Island

Capstone Project: How Social Media and Mobile Technology Can Enhance Court Customer Service

**Dr. Maureen Conner** - MSU Director and Professor

**Barry Lander** - NCBC/MSU Education Liaison





## NCBC Scholarship/ Tuition Assistance Recipient Comments

**Julie Workman - Southern District of Indiana**

I've always considered myself a professional student. I LOVE learning the new and discovering the old. In every position I've ever held, if classes have been offered that will help me improve as an employee and a person, I've always enrolled. I have my Paralegal Certificate through an Associates degree program. It took me five years to complete the program because I couldn't decide on one career path or subject to concentrate on as they all interested me. I've been in the bankruptcy profession for 20+ years and with the court for almost five. When I heard that MSU offered this curriculum, it interested me to the point that I registered to attend the NCBC conference in San Francisco in 2012. One of my main objectives at the conference was going to be finding out as much as I could about MSU and possibly enrolling in the program. Unfortunately, I suffered from a ruptured brain aneurysm on 6/5/12, and didn't get to attend the conference. After a successful surgery it was discovered that I had another brain aneurysm. After finally returning to work, I saw the scholarship information and was intrigued yet again. I thought I'd apply just to see what I could get, if anything. I received a \$500.00 scholarship. I've decided to use it towards the MSU online non certificate program. I have successfully completed only one course so far, the leadership course, as my mental capabilities are much slower than I remember them being before two brain surgeries. The leadership course put such a drive in my mind power that I've given parts of the course material to some of the management here at my court for us to try to incorporate herein. No matter how long this takes me, I plan on completing the program. Whatever I can do to make myself a better person/employee is my main drive. I've even gone as far as thinking about going all the way through to the Master's classes, but have to remind myself to slow down and take one step at a time.

**Dailin Pena - Southern District of Florida**

Not sure if you should join NCBC? Undecided if the Judicial Administration certificate program is right for you? Read on and you will understand why the only answer is YES. I was introduced to NCBC by my Clerk, Katherine Gould-Feldman, and encouraged to join. I'm so glad I did! The \$15 investment has opened opportunities I did not realize were possible through strong networks, conferences, diligence in offering their members various programs and services, and now the NCBC Scholarship/Tuition Assistance program.

While attending my first conference in New Orleans I had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Maureen Conner from Michigan State University (MSU) about the Judicial Administration Non-credit Certificate program. I was hooked and brought back the information to share with other staff in my court. As a trainer, I feel I have an obligation to myself to stay current and grow professionally to better contribute to the mission of the court. I had played with the idea of taking the courses offered at the next NCBC conference to get my feet wet and expand my understanding of the judiciary. Additionally, I would be able to better answer any questions concerning the program logistics since I was doing the program myself.

Even through budget concerns our Clerk always tries to earmark some funds for NCBC attendance. Under these new circumstances though, I did not want to take up a spot from someone who had not yet attended an NCBC conference but I still wanted to start the Judicial Administration Certificate program. I reached out to Dr. Conner to inquire about alternatives to the NCBC offering. I was happily surprised to know the courses were offered online as self-study or interactive courses. When I reviewed the announcement for the NCBC Scholarship/Tuition Assistance program I applied and surprisingly received the acceptance letter in June. The scholarship was a way to increase the classes I could take in a shorter amount of time and defray the investment.

Now looking back upon this year, the scholarship has enabled me to complete my course work. The classes were challenging and provided a holistic view of operations from strategic planning to case flow management. The courses helped me further understand what the judiciary is entrusted to do and appreciate even more the talents and dedication of our court family that make it happen. Here's to a continued partnership between NCBC and MSU that make programs like these available and a special thanks to our members in contributing to its success.

## Spotlight on Technology Being Used in the Courts

Terry Payne - Wisconsin Western

Prior to 1991, which was pre-BANCAP and pre-CM/ECF in our district, each Case Administrator in the Western District of Wisconsin Bankruptcy Court maintained their own procedures consisting of a binder holding 4" of paper. This internal binder of procedures was essentially a culmination of notes passed down during the years for managing bankruptcy procedures in the Clerks headquarters office and the divisional office. The materials in each binder, often included: hand-written notes, typed notes, photocopies, post-its and other examples of documents that would assist staff in their daily activities. This was an inefficient method for documentation and provided no standardization or consistency among case administrators.

Beginning sometime around 1993, the two offices in the Western District of Wisconsin, with a divisional office in Eau Claire and headquarters in Madison, began a joint effort to create a district wide manual. Approximately three hours driving time separated the two offices, so we started meeting half-way between the two offices, to collaborate and combine notes and to develop a single standardized and consistent manual.

The procedures and detailed step-by-step instructions for case opening, filing of motions, objections and other filings were standardized and developed into a consistent format and manual. Around the year 2000, RoboHelp software was used to create an on-line, browser based, searchable user manual. One of the more difficult issues to overcome was the desire to print the entire manual or the belief that certain pages needed to be printed. Since the user manual is so fluid, printed copies quickly became obsolete. Based on concepts developed long ago, our user manuals continue to be updated frequently. The first versions of the manual provided a series of steps and only utilized text to outline a procedure. In later years, we began to combine screen shots and Adobe Captivate demonstrations to further provide illustrations that assist users of the manual. The manuals also include links to our Court Twitter and YouTube channel. We believe by incorporating all of these tools into one resource for the end user, they are more likely to take advantage of using the tools as their learning styles vary.

The initial on-line manual was created for internal use only. However today, with the ability to tag certain information in the software -- one RoboHelp project file is maintained and it outputs to two different on-line user manuals. The result of two separate outputs is an internal Case Administrator procedure manual and an external ECF user manual for Attorneys, Trustees and Limited Use filers. For the past several upgrades of ECF, we have carved out an area (created a new Book) in the manuals to incorporate specific upgrade information that we wanted to convey to our staff and outside users. Since the information is on a web-page, this not only provides a method for us to send direct links in an email to attorneys who have questions, but also creates a historical view of our upgrade documentation.

As you can imagine, with the budget crisis and improvements to collaborating on-line, our offices no longer meet in person to discuss procedure changes. In WIWB, we are using Lotus Connections to collaborate and convey information. There is also a RoboHelp Community via Procedures manuals and RoboHelp.

We feel the use of RoboHelp (or a similar product as there are several to choose from) to maintain our user manuals for the district have been an invaluable tool for conveying information to staff and outside filers utilizing CM/ECF.

# The Conference in Pictures



## CM/ECF Next Gen Update

Used With Permission

### Court Staff Sought for Work on CM/ECF

The Court Services Office (CSO) is recruiting for three temporary duty (TDY) positions to assist with the Next Generation of CM/ECF project. CSO will be looking for one operations person from each court type - Appellate, District and Bankruptcy - who has knowledge and experience with CM/ECF and court operations. The designees will be detailed to Washington, D.C., for a period of six months to a year.

Please visit the Court/AO Exchange page on JNet for the announcement and further details at <http://exchangeprograms.ao.dcn/coax/>.

For questions regarding the Next Generation of CM/ECF Project, please contact Robby Robinson, Chief, Case Management Branch (*Robby*

*Robinson/DCA/AO/USCOURTS* or 202/502-1545).

### Tools to help plan for retirement

#### Order your *free* federal benefits report

NCBC members can still take advantage of a *free* federal benefits report.

This report shows:

- The amount of income you can expect to receive from FERS, Social Security and TSP when you retire.
- The expense associated with FEGLI, FEHB, and Survivor Benefits now and into retirement.
- The ability to create "what if" scenarios with your retirement
- Shows the impact of COLA on retirement

The report is ideal for both short and long range planning, so all working NCBC members can benefit regardless of age or years of service to use

To request your questionnaire please contact James De La Torre at: [idelatorre@fedadvantage.com](mailto:idelatorre@fedadvantage.com)

## Imagining Your Retirement

### James De La Torre, CRPC

When you think about your retirement what do you imagine? For many, retirement has often been viewed as an ending, a time of slowing down and simplifying your life after a long working career. This perspective is changing as people are living longer and are more active. Recently I came across a survey Yahoo! Finance sponsored. In this national survey of Americans 45 and older, 57% described retirement as a new chapter in their lives, seeing it as an opportunity to explore new options and pursue their dreams. Many pre-retirees don't envision a traditional retirement at all, but want to reinvent their careers by entering a new field of work.

Whether your own retirement is approaching quickly or is still down the road, it's important to consider the lifestyle you want to attain. With some planning and communication now you could prevent disappointment down the road. Here are a few key aspects you might want to address.

**When will you retire?** Your retirement age might be a moving target, but it does help to have an age in mind as you envision other aspects of your retirement lifestyle.

Your FERS (or CSRS) pension benefits are determined by three factors: age, years of service and high-3 average salary. Over time these benefits really become a game of numbers and you need to look for ways to maximize your benefits.

For example if you are 60 and have 20 years of service, your FERS pension is calculated at 1.0%. Simple math tells us that you'll receive a FERS pension that's 20% of your high-3 average salary. However, if you were to stay two more years reaching age 62, your FERS pension would be calculated at 1.1%. Doing the math combining the new pension percentage of 1.1% along with the two additional years of service increases your FERS retirement income by over 20%. This added benefit can go a long way providing that extra security retirees look for.

You and your spouse may want to compare how your ages for electing Social Security could affect your lifetime benefits. There are advantages to working until your "normal" Social Security retirement age (66 to 67, depending on birth year) or until age 70, when you would receive your maximum benefit. If you want to retire earlier, you may want to adjust your TSP and other retirement savings accordingly.

#### **Will you continue to work?**

According to an article from the Employee Benefit Research Institute, almost 7 out of 10 current workers plan to work for pay in retirement; the experiences of current retirees suggest this may be more difficult than expected – only 25% report they have worked for pay in retirement. A second career could be rewarding on both a financial and personal level, but you might be better off setting your savings goals so that working is an option rather than a necessity.

#### **Where will you live?**

Some people downsize their homes to reduce expenses and add some home equity to their retirement assets. Or they may move to a more retirement-friendly community or somewhere closer to family. Others prefer to "age in place" and take advantage of having paid off their mortgages. These are all reasonable options. But as with the goal of working for pay, it's generally wise to leave your home out of savings calculations and focus on building other assets.

#### **What activities do you want to pursue?**

You may want to travel, volunteer your time, play golf or another sporting activity, pursue your hobbies and interests – or all of the above. With the freedom of your retirement, the possibilities could be limitless. Keep in mind that some retirement activities are more costly than others and you need to develop your savings strategy appropriately.

These are just some of the many factors that might affect your retirement lifestyle. Whatever you imagine, it's important to set savings goals that reflect your retirement dreams and have the potential to help those dreams come true.

*James De La Torre has conducted federal benefit and financial planning seminars in all of the country. He is a key note speaker at federal conferences and works with federal professional organizations on ways to improve the communication of federal benefits to their membership. Jim has appeared as a guest on "Fed Talk" on the Federal News Radio network, discussing the gaps in federal benefits and the financial impacts employees face. Jim holds a Charter Retirement Planning Counselor's (CRPC) designation from the College of Financial Planning and is a member of the Financial Planning Association. Please direct questions or comments directly to James at [jdelatorre@fedadvantage.com](mailto:jdelatorre@fedadvantage.com)*

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1 Yahoo! Finance, May 6, 2013

2 Employee Benefit Research Institute, 2013

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

It's hard to believe it is already August! I will be retiring at the end of this month, but will finish out my term as editor. I hope you will give careful consideration to applying for the positions that are open this year. Serving in this capacity has been a rewarding experience.

This year's conference was a huge success. The host courts did an outstanding job. They even provided perfect weather! Thanks to all of you who stopped by to talk with me about the newsletter at the Information Sharing session. Congratulations to Leslie Taylor and Stephanie Gerlitz, winners of the drawing for two \$15.00 Starbucks gift cards.

Jennifer Paro, NCBC's co-historian took pictures throughout the conference and provided access to them so that we could include them in the newsletter.

The editorial staff makes every effort to keep NCBC members informed of what is going on with NCBC and with the courts. We value your opinion and would love to hear from you. If you would like to provide feedback about the newsletter, please contact me.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

Laura Whitehead, Editor

2014 editorial committee members: Dailin Pena (FLSB); Heather Aslett (UTB); John Kohler (CACB); Leslie Murin (DEB) and Pat Borokhovich (OHNB).