



# MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR COURT MANAGEMENT

## REFLECTIONS

Volume 1, Issue 1

January through March 2009

### MACM LAUNCHES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER—REFLECTIONS

by Susan Love

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Reflections: To remember, to contemplate, to capture forever the memories of what we have accomplished, to benchmark the road we have traveled, and to wisely map out the road that lies ahead.

As the Minnesota Association for Court Management's (MACM) Membership Services Committee launches this new quarterly newsletter "Reflections," MACM will forever be able to capture the accomplishments, celebrations, and memories we share as colleagues and leaders in the administration of justice in the courts.

This historical moment in time for MACM is another important benchmark for court leaders in reaching for and attaining the association's mission of commitment to the enrichment of its members through professional growth and development opportunities, promoting advancements and innovation in court administration, and partnering with other professionals working to improve the Justice System in Minnesota.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your President in

recognizing the hard work and dedication of the MACM Membership Services Committee in bringing the concept of this newsletter to reality.

When Anoka County Court Administrator Jane Morrow brought the concept of a MACM newsletter to this committee, the members of the committee embraced the challenge and moved forward without ever looking back. In the words of a past MACM President, Mike Moriarty: "An effective committee can take on any challenge and respond with collective and collaborative focus, spirited discussion, creativity, and laughter." The MACM Membership Services Committee members have done just that. Our gratitude goes to: Jennifer Schlieper (Chair), Gail Clapp (Vice-Chair), Vicky Carlson, Pam Kilpela, Lisa Logghe, DeAnn Hallberg, Janice Cossette, Tama Hall, Becky Knudson, Sandra Vrtacnik, and Annette Fritz.

Since becoming a MACM member in 2004, I have been professionally and personally blessed with the opportunity to build business relationships and

friendships with many court leaders across the State of Minnesota and the country. I know of many court leaders who share the same sentiment. The business relationships we have established, through the common bond of MACM, are built on a solid foundation of camaraderie, a passion for upholding justice, and the desire to lead wisely.

It is my hope that MACM, through many years to come, will continue to serve as a conduit by which court leaders throughout Minnesota can come together to support and celebrate each others' accomplishments, learn together, share ideas, and find solutions for operational and procedural challenges. "Reflections" will be a quarterly reminder for us all to take the time to reflect on, learn from, and celebrate the wisdom of the past so that we may continue to move forward into a bright and promising future.



Susan Love, MACM President

# What Ever Happened To ?

## Lorraine Norgren

by Jane Morrow, Anoka County Court Administrator

What's the first thing that you'd think about doing after retiring from working for the courts in Minnesota for 35 years?

Would it be going to work for a food shelf? Ask Lorraine Norgren, retired Court Administrator in Sherburne County, who spent about 12 months adjusting to being retired and then promptly dedicated her time to assisting those less fortunate in her home county.

When asked what prompted her to give her time away to such a worthy initiative, Lori explained that she attended church weekly only to read in the church bulletin about the need for a church representative on the food shelf board of directors. While she avoided the temptation to volunteer for a few months, she finally succumbed when others didn't. She started attending board meetings and quickly found that volunteering at the food shelf was her passion in life. In January of 2008, she became Chair of the Board of Directors and now works an estimated 15 hours per week at the organization.

In her community, this organization is called CAER and it is a non-profit, community-based Christian organization, whose mission it is to provide emergency foods, clothing and special assistance to individuals and families in need. CAER was founded in 1979 and relies on the commitment of churches, schools, youth groups, civic organizations and businesses to support its needs.

With the economy in bad shape, church membership declining and businesses failing, enhancing the financial support for the organization has been problematic. As a consequence, many of Lori's talents have recently been redirected to fundraising through special events such as a golf tournament, silent auction and upcoming Mystery Dinner. The organization also needs to establish a more reliable way of generating operating funds so that they need not depend on the stipends provided by local churches. In other words, she has her work cut out for her again.

When asked about her

memories of court work, Lori proudly looks back on a career that started after a short stint working in a downtown Minneapolis bank and ended as the Court Administrator in Sherburne County. She remembers with great fondness the many influential judges and other court personnel that influenced her life. She mentions a kinder and gentler time when she felt court employees could really take the time to solve problems and help our customers with a personal touch. Lori claims that she left the job when she felt it had become too chaotic and demanding in ways that took a toll on a person. She also felt she couldn't have the same impact on a hurting population. Ironically, Lori finds similarities in helping a different hurting population in her work with CAER finding fulfillment in serving the needs of others less fortunate than she in the community.

Lori and her husband John continue to life in Elk River and occasionally spend a month in Florida or Arizona.

### Note:

Rarely do we have the opportunity to focus on the great deeds done by our peers in their private hours or after retirement.

As MACM inaugurates a new version of a newsletter, the officers were delighted about the opportunity to feature one story in every edition about the good works of current or former members of MACM.

Let your MACM officers know if you appreciate the information and better yet, contact one of them with a story idea for a future edition.

## Minnesota State Court News From The Land of 10,000 Lakes

### First Judicial District

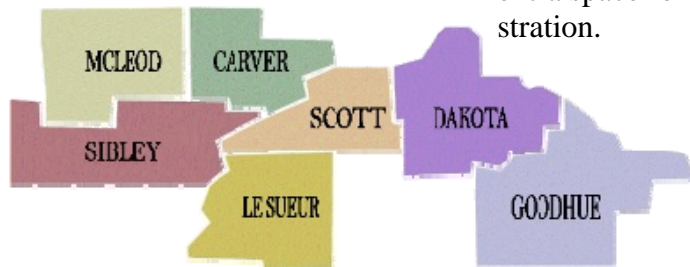
*by Greg Ess, Scott County Court Administrator*

The First Judicial District welcomes our two newest Judges who are both being sworn in during the month of November.

Judge Caroline Lennon will be chambered in Scott County and Judge M. Michael Baxter will be chambered in LeSueur County.

The expansion of the Carver County Justice Center is on schedule and should be completed in April, 2009.

The expansion will provide the addition of one new courtroom, the relocation of a ceremonial courtroom, and much needed extra space for Court Administration.



### Second Judicial District

*by Lynae Olson, Ramsey County Civil Administrator*

As of August 2008, the Second District has a new Chief Judge and Assistant Chief Judge:



Chief Judge Kathleen Gearin (pictured above) was elected to replace outgoing Chief Judge Gregg Johnson and Edward J.



Assistant Chief Judge Clearly

was elected Assistant Chief Judge to replace Judge Kathleen Gearin.

The Republican National Convention (RNC) came to town in early September.



Many months of planning and work prepared the court for over 700 arrests and to date, about 200 Republican National Convention related hearings.

Staff, judges and others worked multiple shifts and long hours to accommodate the heightened security issues, media attention,

volume and "out of ordinary" cases!

Many supervisors and managers are participating in a pilot Mentor and Mentee Program. The program was launched in April of this year and will be assessed for effectiveness and continuation after one year. Preliminary information received to date points to a very successful pilot so far.



*The Second Judicial District encompasses Ramsey County.*

## Fourth Judicial District

by Kate Fogarty, Hennepin County Criminal Division Sr. Manager

Honorable Anne V. Simonett is remembered for her service to the public and the judiciary as a 4th Judicial District and the only female Chief Justice of the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

The “employee of the year” award that bears her name was implemented in the Fourth Judicial District Court in 1995 to commemorate her work to excellence, from playing piano in Vienna to graduating from Harvard Law School with honors. This year’s nominees included...

**Patty Botes:** Patty, our civil case management expert. Judges and staff see her dedication, hard work, and loyalty to the Fourth through her MNCIS implementation input, testing and functionality.

**Sherry Hoad:** Sherry has 20 years of dedicated service in District Court as a Senior Court Clerk in the Criminal Division. Sadly, Sherry passed away suddenly this year. She will be remembered affectionately as the ‘queen of commitments.’

**Brenda Langfellow:** Brenda is

our Criminal Division Suburban Court Manager. Her ability to listen to internal and external customer concerns and utilize that feedback to facilitate and implement system wide change is commendable.

**Art Layton, Jr:** Art is a Court Operations Supervisor in Juvenile Court. Art is recognized for his leadership, team player attitude and versatility.

**Bob Sommerville:** Bob is a Court Operations Supervisor in our Criminal Division. Bob leads by example, creates a harmonious work environment and continuously improves staff morale.

**Alonna Warns:** Alonna is our leading authority on Information Probate in Minnesota. Alonna’s dedication, hard work, professionalism, and quality assurance contributed to the first permanent paperless file process in the Fourth Judicial District Court.

**Leo Willey:** Leo is a Court Operations Supervisor in the Criminal Division. Without fail, Leo is always there to assist others as a true ‘public servant.’ Because of his organ-

izational and implementation skills, he leads a smooth running Court team.

And the winner is...



**Judge Steve Pihlaja:** Judge Pihlaja coordinated the Everybody Wins! literacy program, a rewarding experience for over 200 students and numerous volunteers since 2004. Sadly, Judge Pihlaja passed away suddenly this fall.

Judge Pihlaja will be remembered for his generosity and dedication to helping people. He was truly a role model for all mankind.

*The Fourth Judicial District encompasses Hennepin County.*



### Fifth Judicial District

by Connie Belgard, Martin County Court Administrator

The Fifth District welcomes two new judges.



Judge Gregory Anderson was sworn in on August 1<sup>st</sup> in Watonwan County and Judge Michelle Dietrich was sworn in on August 15<sup>th</sup> in Lyon County.

The Fifth District also welcomes a new Interpreter Coordinator. Javier Callram began his duties the beginning of October and has been very busy interpreting and coordinating.

His office is located in Watonwan County.



*The Fifth Judicial District encompasses Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, and Watonwan counties*

### Seventh Judicial District

by Jan Cossette, Becker and Clay County Court Administrator

On June 26, 2008, the first combined 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> District Court Administrator's meeting was held. Since the districts share a District Administrator and quite a bit of District Administration staff, we felt it's an efficient use of our time. The combined meeting also allows us to also start thinking outside of county/district lines and move towards sharing resources/implementing efficiencies between counties throughout both districts. Some sharing that currently occurs:

Becker County completes jury processing for Clay and Becker, Morrison County completes jury processing for Douglas and Morrison. We are also in the preliminary stages of implementing in-court updating, beginning with Becker County.

Two other "noteworthy" events within the 7<sup>th</sup> District: On Oct. 7, the official groundbreaking took place for the \$9 million, 40,000 square foot Mille Lacs County Justice Center which will be home to Court Services, County Attorney's Office, Court Administration and four courtrooms. On June 20, Becker County opened a new \$7 million addition to the existing courthouse. The new addition includes Court Administration, County Attorney, 3 courtrooms and judge's chambers.

*The Seventh Judicial District encompasses Becker, Benton, Clay, Douglas, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Stearns, Todd, and Wadena counties.*

### Eighth Judicial District

by Roger Strand, Big Stone and Traverse County Court Administrator

The six counties of the Northern Assignment Area in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District have combined budgets into one account for greater efficiencies in staff time at both the county and district level.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> District court administrators have been holding joint district meetings since this summer. Tim Ostby is the judicial district administrator for both districts.

*The Eighth Judicial District encompasses Big Stone, Chippewa, Grant, Kandiyohi, LacQuiParle, Meeker, Pope, Renville, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine counties.*



## Ninth Judicial District

by Amy Turnquist, Cass County Court Administrator

The Ninth Judicial District has had several noteworthy events transpire over the past few months.

After 33 years of service to Itasca County, Court Administrator, Diane Gross has retired; Diane's last day was September 30<sup>th</sup>. She was a wonderful asset and will be greatly missed by everyone in the District.

Court Operations Supervisor, Linda Machen has been appointed as Acting Court Administrator.

Additionally, on October 24<sup>th</sup>, the Access and Service Delivery (ASD) Team of Chief Justice Eric Magnuson, Justice Lorie Gildea, and Judge John Rodenberg, presented, to the Ninth District Judges and Court Administrators, the 'ASD Committee Findings and Recommendations to the Judicial Council'. Financial Director, Lee Mehrkens presented the 'MN Judicial Branch Budget Overview'.

Finally, on a somber note, Judge Richard Taylor (Ret.) passed away on September 19,

2008. Judge Taylor served the State of Minnesota as a Ninth Judicial District Court Judge from 1998 – 2004.

Retired Judge James R. Wilson of Roseau County passed away on October 3, 2008. Judge Wilson served the State of Minnesota as a Ninth Judicial District Court Judge from 1990 - 2001.

*The Ninth Judicial District encompasses Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Kittson, Koochiching, Lake-Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau counties.*

## Tenth Judicial District

by Chris Volkers, Washington County Court Administrator

There are many exciting things happening in the Tenth Judicial District! Of particular note is courthouse expansion – three counties within the district are expanding dramatically due to an ever increasing caseload.

Pine County Courts recently celebrated the first anniversary of their beautiful new facility. Judge Krista Martin attended a Pine County Commissioners' Board meeting to thank them again for their work on this project. She reported that the facility and the technological features integrated into it have provided a much more secure, functional, and efficient work space for the courts. She told them that very favorable com-

ments have been received by the judges and court staff from the public and attorneys accessing the services of the court and appearing for court proceedings.

Washington County is nearing completion of a new five story courts tower with eighteen judicial chambers, eight new state-of-the-art courtrooms, and comprehensive security throughout. Five more courtrooms will be remodeled along with court administration space on two current floors with completion in 2010.

The remodeled areas will have new and innovative juror assembly space with a business

center for their use and convenience. The new courts tower will overlook the beautiful St. Croix River and is sure to be a monument for years to come.

Sherburne County is also undergoing a major courthouse expansion to accommodate their growing population. In fact, the tenth judicial district office will move from Ramsey, Minnesota to the new Sherburne Courthouse upon completion.

*The Tenth Judicial District encompasses Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright counties.*

# MACM Soon to Launch New Website

by Susan Love, MACM President

The Minnesota Association for Court Managers is excited to announce the development and future launch of a new and fresh looking website (see below).

The website is currently under construction by a leading web designer and will be ready for you to visit in the very near future.

The redesign of MACM's website will provide members with easier access to committee minutes and conference

agendas, more pictures, MACM's quarterly newsletter, and much more.

The MACM Membership Services Committee has worked very diligently over the last several months to make this vision a reality. Our gratitude to them for pursuing this initiative.

MACM's new website will be a window for the world to visit Minnesota's premiere court association. Court associations from across the coun-

try will enjoy the look, feel and content of this new website as they keep up-to-date on Minnesota court news. This new website will also give MACM the enhanced ability to continue to highlight and celebrate the accomplishments of its members in a dynamic and innovative way.

Stay tuned for an email link coming your way soon which will open the door to MACM's beautiful new website.

