

Addendum

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Puppet Masters

Kermit and his Muppet friends would be so proud

Kermit has been singing for years about how it's not easy being green, and now he has some students at Eastwood Middle School to back him up.

It's not easy being green, or different, a lesson the students are taking to elementary schools in the region.

Charles Davenport, 13, is part of a project at the school that not only teaches about Hispanic heritage, but goes way beyond, teaching students and others as well—through puppets—that tolerance is more than just a word; it's an everyday action.

With a grant from Teaching Tolerance, a division of **The Southern Poverty Law Center**, Eastwood's foreign language department and the E! Husketeers puppeteers join together for the puppet production "Detras de la Cortina," which is Spanish for "Behind the Curtain." The performance is highlighted by colorful music and maps of countries around the world from which Spanish speakers hail.

Based on knowledge gleaned from school-wide surveys, data collection and analysis, students wanted to educate others about student immigration, diversity and tolerance, said **Shannon Beard**, sixth-grade counselor at the school who spearheads the puppet program. The foreign language students at the school wrote the script.

The E! Husketeers puppeteers perform to songs that include themes taught in Spanish class, said **Nina Youngblood**, Spanish teacher. Spanish students narrate the show in Spanish and English, which features songs that teach tolerance.



"It's Not Easy Being Green," originally a Kermit the Frog song, is a favorite, as well as "Wonderful World," made famous by Louis Armstrong.

And, the project doesn't end with the performances.

"We will conduct a post-performance survey that measures any change in attitudes toward those of a diverse culture," Youngblood said. "The students enjoy it so much. It's so important to teach our youth about diversity and tolerance, so they can be more understanding adults."

E! Husketeers puppeteers have also begun building relationships with elementary students through a pen-pal extension of their performance which, down the road, will mature into a mentoring program as students transition to Eastwood Middle.

Youngblood has her Spanish students "adopt" a Spanish-speaking student from one of Eastwood's feeder elementary schools and correspond with them in Spanish.

(Continued on page 2)

Protect Your Financial Privacy

Privacy basics and opt-out strategies can also help you de-stress



The following tips and contact information appeared in the October 2007 issue of the Retirement Systems of Alabama newsletter, *The Advisor*. Check them out—they could help you protect your good name and preserve your sanity.

Reduce Telemarketing

Contact the National Do Not Call Registry at (888) 382-1222 or go online at www.donotcall.gov.

If called by a company you do business with, ask to be placed on its internal “Do Not Call List.”

Opt Out of Pre-Approved Credit Card Offers

Call (888) 5-OPT-OUT/(888) 567-8688 or opt out online at www.optoutprescreen.com.

Receive Your Credit Report for Free Once a Year

Get a free copy of your credit report annually. The three credit bureaus are Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com where you can order reports

directly or download the Annual Credit Report Request form. You can also call (877) 322-8228. For more information, see the Federal Trade Commission’s Facts for Consumers at www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/credit/freereports.htm.

Tip: To monitor your credit reports year-round, get one report every four months.

Reduce Junk Mail

Write to the Mail Preference Service. Send a \$1 check or money order. Include the name(s) and address of household members who do not want to receive junk mail, and instruct them to put you on the opt-out list. The address is Direct Marketing Association, Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 643, Carmel NY 10512. Or, opt out online at www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist.

Abacus compiles a cooperative database of catalog and publishing companies’ customers. To opt out of that database, write to Abacus, P.O. Box 1478, Broomfield CO 80038, or e-mail optout@abacus-us.com.

Puppet Masters

(Continued from page 1)

Beard encourages students to think of the puppets as an extension of themselves, and said that each year the puppets take on a new life and personality of their own, thanks to the student operating that puppet.

The puppets are passed down from older students to the sixth-graders, who then spend a year training before they perform. The puppeteer project is sponsored year-round by the **Tuscaloosa County Bar Association**, which, Beard said, is a lifesaver since each puppet costs about \$100 dollars—and that’s before clothes, accessories or “extra arms.” That and the help from the Southern Poverty Law Center make it all possible.



Youngblood said, “This is hands-on learning at its best. Who knows where this will lead?”

—Meredith Cummings, Pulse editor, **The Tuscaloosa News**
(Article reprinted in part with permission)

Remember What You Enjoyed?

You used to do things just for fun—
It's okay to do that again

It is no coincidence that recent legal publications contain a plethora of articles regarding the reclamation of free time. As attorneys, we often get lost in the struggle of the daily grind. Somewhere in the process of becoming successful, we lose a part of ourselves that defined us as an individual. Many people never even realize it until the day they discover their own unhappiness with life outside the office. Shamefully, it happens to the best of us.

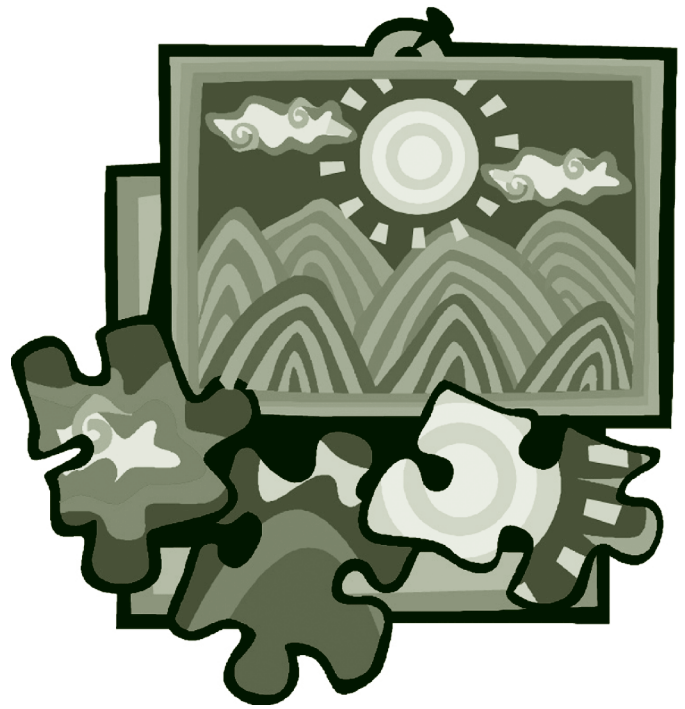
Sometime in the past, there was an activity or hobby that you enjoyed more than anything else. Maybe you hunted, fished, sang, danced, wrote, or acted. Where do those things fit into your life now? What sacrifice would it take to slow down just a bit and do these activities again? Asking these questions is a very simple way to evaluate your life. If you can't find a small block of time for yourself in which to enjoy your favorite things, what kind of life are you living?

A recent visit with a mentor prompted a look back at what I personally enjoyed in my own past. He reminded me of a poem I wrote when his son unexpectedly passed away. In homage to my mentor's favorite poet, I modeled a poem after Robert Penn Warren's "*Heart of Autumn*." Although it was the only gift I could give to my mentor at that time, the true gift was actually the solace I personally found while writing.

Perhaps I should explain.

Years ago, every day for at least an hour at a time, I wrote poetry. I scribbled away for almost 15 years with a dented chrome Zippo pen. There was immense pleasure to be found in the scratch of that pen on paper, the scent of ink, the sight of pages filling with my thoughts and the little callous on my middle finger created by the pen as its ridges rubbed across my skin. Journals full of my poems now call a dusty corner of my bookshelf home. The last truly good poem I wrote was after my mentor's son died. When faced with insurmountable feelings of grief, confusion or remorse, I wrote.

What happened to that creativity? My work allows for lots of writing and reading and the pleasure of the



click-clack of the keyboard as I write every day. It is actually a wonderful job where I spend most of my time with a computer and a problem to solve. Even so, what about curling up in my favorite chair with a pen and paper and finding comfort in my written word? That activity needs to find a place in my life again.

The point of this diatribe is that an activity I once enjoyed enriched my life. Look into your own past and resurrect the things you used to love so much. They just might make you into a better person.

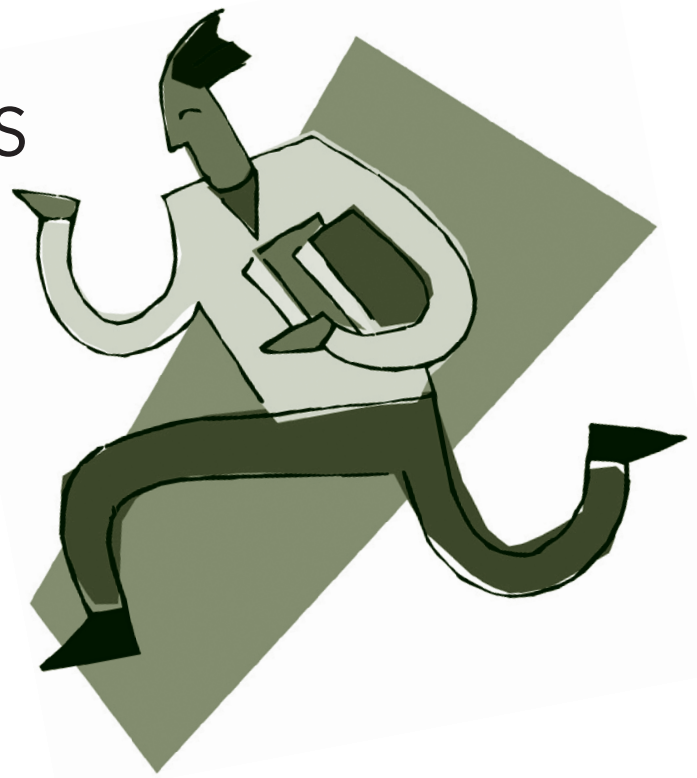
—By Leslie Ellis, Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis & Miles PC, Montgomery

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President Bush Signs Student Loan Forgiveness Bill

The American Bar Association recommended its passage as a way to help those in public service jobs in the law



At the end of September, President George W. Bush signed into law H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. Among the provisions of the law is the income-based repayment program for public service, for which the American Bar Association has strongly advocated for several years.

Under the program, borrowers of student loans who are working in qualified public service would repay loans at an affordable percentage of their income and, after ten years of service, would have the balance of their loans cancelled.

"It is in our interest to invest in those who serve the public," stated ABA President William H. Neukom. "Today's signing into law of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act is an important first step in helping those—including lawyers—who choose a career in public service, by giving them new tools to cope with crushing educational debts. It will help our nation's best and brightest

pursue public service jobs in the law and in other fields."

The provision was one of the recommendations of the ABA Commission on Loan Forgiveness and Repayment Assistance, which was formed in 2001. The average law school student graduates with nearly \$80,000 of debt just from law school. Given that the average starting salary of a public interest lawyer is roughly \$40,000, loan repayment can claim 40 percent of a borrower's take-home pay. Naturally, this forces many to leave public service for higher paying jobs.

Under the new income-based program, monthly payments are capped at 15 percent of discretionary income.

The law includes prosecution and public defense, as well as "legal advocacy in low-income communities at a non-profit organization." In addition to lawyers, other public service jobs are included in the new law, P.L. 110-84. Many of the provisions took effect October 1.

CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK POSITION AVAILABLE United States Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit

The U.S. Eleventh Circuit Judicial Council invites applications for the position of chief deputy clerk. A letter of application with a resume should be submitted by **December 17, 2007** to Thomas K. Kahn, clerk, U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit, 56 Forsyth St., NW, Atlanta 30303, Attn: Human Resources Manager.

The person selected for the position will be required to undergo a background investigation.

The chief deputy clerk is a senior-level position reporting to the clerk. Major responsibilities include assisting the clerk with the supervision, management and administrative operation of the clerk's offices (75+ employees).

A copy of the complete position description and requirements is available upon request from the Human Resources Manager at (404) 335-6202.

The Nina Miglionic “Paving the Way” Leadership Award



Nina Miglionic

The Women Lawyers' Section of the Birmingham Bar Association established the Nina Miglionic “Paving the Way” Leadership Award to recognize and honor lawyers who have actively paved the way to success and advancement for women lawyers.

“Miss Nina,” as she is affectionately known to the Birmingham community, exemplifies a life devoted to the public good, as one of the state’s first women lawyers to engage in private practice in 1936, as the first female elected to the Birmingham City Council in 1963 and as an altruistic supporter of her church, community and nation throughout her decades of service. From her beginning in a family of Italian immigrants, her short stature belies her tall standing as a role model and mentor to women lawyers in Alabama and the United States.

United States District Judge Inge Prytz Johnson

was the first recipient of the award and last year’s recipient was **Ann Huckstep**, with Adams & Reese LLP.

The Women Lawyers’ Section is soliciting nominations for this award. The nominee should be a lawyer who has:

1. Achieved professional excellence, and
2. Assisted women lawyers to achieve their potential through mentoring, or
3. Inspired women lawyers to achieve their potential by providing a professional role model, or
4. Provided opportunities that paved the way for advancement of the status of women lawyers.

Nominations should be postmarked by December 29, 2007.

For more information or to get a nomination form, contact Leatha Gilbert at lgilbert@lgilbertlaw.com.

Internet Freebies

There’s no catch or cost to these—*really*

If you’re always on the lookout for a smart and easy-to-use utility for your computer, check out techsupportalert.com. You’ll find a listing of 46 free utilities. You can browse through the list to find a digital editor, a firewall program, anti-virus software, a search toolbar, a digital photo organizer, and even a sticky notes utility. All of it is freeware, meaning you can download it without any cost involved and even try each one to see if it meets your needs. And, best of all, the list continues to grow, making it a valuable resource for anyone who uses a computer.



“Wills for Heroes” Clinic in Mobile Continues the Success

Area attorneys and paralegals helped spread the word about this voluntary program for first-responders by assisting them with estate-planning.

The “Wills for Heroes” project, which began in Montgomery September 11, held its inaugural clinic in Mobile October 22. The Mobile Volunteer Lawyers Program coordinated this effort hosted by the Mobile Police Department. Seven attorney volunteers, including **Meegan Nelson** who acted as the area coordinator, four paralegals from the Alabama Paralegal Association and an attorney specializing in estate matters worked to provide 19 police officers with basic estate-planning services over the course of the afternoon. The police officers who participated gave the program rave reviews.

The Alabama “Wills for Heroes” project is computer-driven, enabling lawyers from any practice area to draft a simple will, power of attorney and healthcare directive for those first-responders who qualify for the program. Each first-responder whose estate is valued at less than \$600,000¹ is eligible for the program. Those who require or want a more complex estate plan are directed to consult with an attorney of their choice.

Because the goal is to provide these services statewide, volunteer lawyers and paralegals in every community are needed to help participate in clinics. A lawyer does not have to be an “estate lawyer” to be eligible to assist first-responders. A free one-hour Web-based CLE course is available to participating lawyers and serves as a “refresher” on basic estate law matters and issues that typically come up in the program. In addition, first-responders are given a questionnaire to review and complete prior to the event date. The questionnaire includes a brief explanation of the planning process and requests key information that each first-responder must provide to complete the documents. An attorney specializing in trusts and estates will



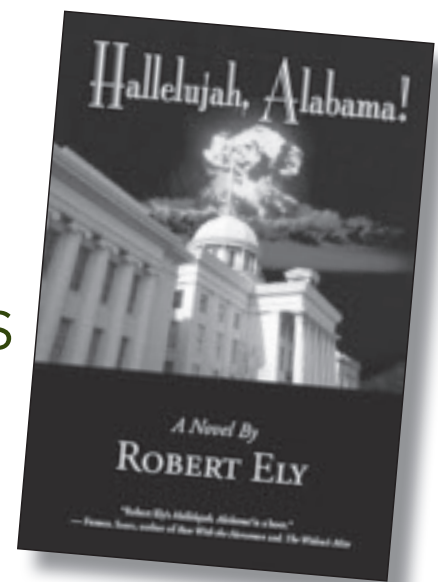
be available on the day of each program to handle any unforeseen questions or circumstances that may arise. To volunteer, go to the Alabama State Bar Web site, www.alabar.org/wfh/wfh_enroll.cfm.

¹Each city or state in the “Wills for Heroes” project can set whatever qualifying criteria it desires. The Alabama committee adopted a \$600,000 threshold not because of any tax implications, but because of concerns that anyone having an estate at that value probably needed private legal estate planning.

Book Review

Montgomery attorney's new novel lampoons Alabama politics

Laugh at others, and yourself, in this “love song to Alabama”



Hallelujah, Alabama!, by Montgomery attorney **Robert Ely**, is described as a “wickedly funny and wise satire of contemporary Southern politics and culture.”

Ferrol Sams, a physician and fellow novelist from Georgia who authored *Run With the Horsemen* and *The Widow's Mite*, said, “Robert Ely’s *Hallelujah, Alabama!* is a hoot, whether in Alabama or elsewhere!”

Judith Paterson, a native of Montgomery who now teaches journalism at the University of Maryland and is the author of *Sweet Mystery: A Book of Remembering*, wrote, “That smarty-pants Robert Ely has written the first great Alabama novel of the 21st century. He pokes fun at every human folly, including his own—and yours and mine. The book is laugh-out-loud funny. Yet, beneath the fun, lies a forgiving acceptance of the human condition just as it is. Never mind how bizarrely we and his state may, on occasion, behave—or misbehave.”

In Ely’s novel, readers meet Richard Steick, Ph.D., a professor of literature and attorney-at-law in the fictional town of Hallelujah, Alabama, not far from Montgomery. Steick is a good man who wants to do good despite feeling a bit unsteady in his own moral and spiritual universe.

When Steick discovers a curious land deed among the dusty documents in the county probate office, he sets out on an ambitious quest to right an old wrong and to bring closer together the races in Alabama. Unfortunately for Steick, he makes a few mistakes along the way, but in the process, he discovers the true meaning of life, love and happiness.

Robert Ely is an associate professor of English and an attorney in private practice, a former journalist, textbook author and the author of two books of verse, *Encanchata* and the nationally acclaimed *Mose T’s Slapout Family Album*. He describes his newest book as “a love song to Alabama, a place which has always seemed a vast conspiracy to make me happy.”

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

The current four-year term of the Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Florida concludes February 29, 2008. Because the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit received fewer than four qualified applications for this position, the Court is reopening the application process. Minimum qualifications include five years’ active criminal law practice, significant supervisory experience and active membership in a bar association of any state, the District of Columbia or the Virgin Islands. The current salary is \$145,300. The full announcement and application are available at www.ca11.uscourts.gov. Submit applications by December 14, 2007 to Norman E. Zoller, Circuit Executive, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, 56 Forsyth St., NW, Atlanta 30303.

ATTORNEY I, II OR III

The Administrative Office of Courts has an opening in its legal division for an attorney I, II or III. The salary range for this position is \$43,963.20 to \$101,839.20. The attorney hired will work at the Judicial Building in Montgomery as a member of the legal division’s staff. Applications will be taken from October 15, 2007 through January 15, 2008. Applicants should complete an Alabama Unified Judicial Systems’ employment application which can be obtained from the AOC Web site at <http://humanresources.alacourt.gov> or from the AOC Personnel office. Send the application to the Administrative Office of Courts, Attn: Human Resources Division, 300 Dexter Ave., Montgomery 36104-3741 or fax it to (334) 954-5205.



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