
THE *GUARDIAN AD LITEM*

JUDICIAL DISTRICT 3B COURIER

GAIL C. HORNE, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

October 2010

A Child's Advocate
In Court



GAL OFFICE STAFF SCHEDULE:



*GAL Office Hours (Regular Schedule) 8a.m. to 5 p.m.
(Unless we are running errands, out to lunch, or in court
somewhere)

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

November 11, 2010 – Closed for Veteran's Day
November 25 & 26, 2010 – Closed for Thanksgiving
December 24 & 27, 2010 – Closed for Christmas
December 31, 2010 – Closed for New Year's

SAVE THE DATE – Details Coming Soon

Craven and Pamlico Volunteer Christmas Luncheon
December 14, 2010 – Morgan's Tavern and Grill

Carteret Volunteer Christmas Luncheon
December 15, 2010 – Floyd's 1921 Restaurant



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GAL STATE ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCES HER RETIREMENT

Greetings! It is so difficult to write this message and to tell you that I plan to retire. I celebrated my 70th birthday at the end of last month, and



it was a little momentous for me. Suddenly becoming 70 didn't make me feel old or even older, but it did make me take stock of my life. At this time, I need and want to spend more time with my family, and for that reason I plan to retire December 1, 2010.

I know that we are in a challenging time, and I don't want you to think that I am abandoning you. I feel confident that the Guardian ad Litem Program will flourish with new leadership, because I know the depth of talent in the field and in the state office. And, I know the commitment that you all have to our program and the children we serve. I have had many jobs, but serving as GAL Administrator has certainly been the most rewarding and enjoyable. . . . Being offered this position in February 2002 represented such a circle for me. . . . I have gained a strong respect for the talents and dedicated commitment of our volunteers, attorneys, and our staff in the state and district offices. But, I will miss working with you, because I have enjoyed that experience so very much.

With my gratitude and very best wishes,

~Jane Volland

FROM GAIL HORNE:

Just some thoughts from a rambling mind . . .

Where did the summer go? I was just getting ready to start enjoying the warm weather and sunny days; I looked at the calendar and it said October . . . I do not believe that is possible. The old adage of time flying when you are having fun is VERY true for me. Time flies by and it is due, in part, to the fact that I am having so much fun doing what I absolutely love. I love knowing that what we do makes a real difference in children's lives . . . I love working with people who are awesome . . . I love feeling like I am contributing to a better world . . . I love setting an example for my own children about how to care for other people. I realize that I am very lucky to love what I do. But it really does seem like time literally flies by for me. I owe each of you a tremendous thank you for being an active participant in my love affair with my job.

The state office periodically reminds all staff to slow down occasionally and take time for self. Sometimes it is hard to find that time when it is flying by. I need to pass that message of “taking care of self” on to each of you as well. The holidays are FAST approaching and they bring with them a special type of stress—positive stress, but stress, none the less. So take good care of yourselves. Take time to enjoy the seasons; take time to pat yourselves on the back for caring, for making a difference, for being a role model and for making our world a better place. Take good care; you are valuable and important! I hope that your holiday seasons are blessed and joy filled.

I am concerned about these difficult economic times and the effects on the children that we serve as well as our volunteers/program. We have actually lost several volunteers because they were previously retired and had the time to volunteer but have now had to go back to work to support themselves and their families and now do not have the available time that they once had. In addition to needing to continue to grow our volunteer pool to just meet the normal demands, we are now forced with the reality of having to meet the additional needs created from losing volunteers. Likewise families that are challenged in so many ways already—money, drugs, lack of skills, violence—are facing the combined and extended challenges that difficult economic times place on us all. Children in these families are affected. Caseloads are increasing and as they do, the time to achieve permanence is extending because of lack of resources internally (in the homes) and externally (in the community). There do not seem to be any easy answers for much of what is going on. I know that it is frustrating for you as you try to locate resources for your families and children. Just know that we are all, GALs, DSS, providers and community partners, in this mess together.

I want to share with you some changes that will be taking place in the near future. The Craven office will be moving to a new location. The county has remodeled the St. Luke’s Hospital facility and we will be moved to the first floor of that building after the New Year. We are excited about the new location and newer office space; however it will bring challenges in that the actual space is not as large as we currently have. We will have access to a conference room and that will be GREAT for meetings and trainings. One of the goals for our program for 2011 will be to increase our volunteer numbers. If you have suggestions or ways for us

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to do this, please share them with me, Jane or Jeri. We are always looking for places to spread our message, sing your praises and enlist additional help to serve our children.

Finally, I have some good personal news to share with you. On September 26, 2010 at 4:55 a.m., my oldest daughter gave birth to my first grandchild. Her name is Claren Riley Jones. She weighed 6lbs and 7oz. She is just perfect and beautiful, as you might well imagine!! Everyone is doing well, not getting quite as much sleep as we once did but that is okay because our awake time is spent oogling over our new baby. Her parents are ecstatic. The only dilemma that we have is that I refuse to be called “Grand-anything” and do not like the traditional Mimi, Maw Maw or Nana names. I have, to date, given my daughter and son-in-law two options to consider as they introduce their daughter to who I am in her life. The options are “Queenie” or “Tootsie”. If you have any other suggestions, let me hear them, or if you want to cast your vote on the two mentioned options, let me hear from you!! We have a little bit of time and you can be instrumental in helping to identify Claren’s name for me . . . just be kind. Warmest regards to you all.

MESSAGE FROM THE JUDGE’S OFFICE

FROM THE HONORABLE JUDGE PAUL QUINN:



It’s hard to believe 2010 is drawing to a close. With the holidays fast approaching and the current state of our economy, your vigilance on behalf of our abused, neglected and dependent children becomes more vital than ever. In your duties ensuring the safety of these children, be ever mindful of the tensions that become elevated during this time of year. Make every effort to be more accessible, cooperative and most of all *committed* in your responsibilities and duties as a Guardian ad Litem. The work you do on behalf of these children is unmatched and vital to their well-being and permanency. The Court holds your opinions and recommendations with high regard. We appreciate and recognize your dedication and hard work, and we feel very blessed to have each of you advocating on behalf of the children in our community.

On behalf of all of the District Court Judges, have a Blessed & Safe Holiday.

Volunteer Spotlight



In each newsletter, we turn the “spotlight” on an incredible volunteer who sets an example in his or her advocacy efforts and inspires each of us to do more. This is an opportunity to sing praises for the work that each of you contributes to our program, and is also an excellent way for us to get to know each other a little better.

This volunteer is relatively “new” to the area and to the program. In fact, she heard about the program at a Newcomer’s Club meeting. She is quite active in the community, sharing her time and efforts to help animals in need, as well as children in need.

She has been a volunteer with this program since May 2007. She has already served 11 children, and is currently working with 6 children from 3 families who are in 4 different placements. Even when she was fairly new at this, she hit the ground running. She is a great investigator and does a wonderful job conveying her information to the court. She faithfully attends all of the meetings for these children and has spent countless hours observing supervised visitations. She is dedicated and caring. She is both tough and tenderhearted, taking the bull by the horns as needed. Tremendous thanks to **Linda Maurer** for digging in her heels to make sure her children are well represented.

WELCOME, NEW VOLUNTEERS:



Congratulations and welcome to the newest trained and sworn-in volunteers:

Craven County: **Michele Reynolds, Cheryl Wyatt, and Ngo Imbu**

Carteret County: **Bruce Parrott and Fran Hamilton**

TRAINING

We are currently working on a training class for new GALs starting the first week of November. If you know of any friends or family members who are looking for ways to serve their communities or who have a soft spot for

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children, please refer them to the Guardian ad Litem Program. Please have them contact our office or they can visit the website at <http://www.ncgal.org>.

FROM CINDI M. QUAY:

Attorney Advocate for Carteret County

In writing an article for this month’s newsletter, I struggled to find a topic that would have some merit coming from the new kid on the block. A glance through the manual for the North Carolina Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Training Program revealed all of the topics I had begun to consider writing about already had been covered by this fabulous manual. So instead, what I found myself doing as I glanced through the manual was comparing the view from the Guardian’s ad Litem table with the view from the parents’ table.

I have been the Attorney Advocate in Carteret County for just three months now, but I have spent the last four years representing parents in Craven and Pamlico counties. And let me tell you, the view is very different.

Every parent attorney will tell you a parent’s most precious commodity is time. There have been very few occasions where my client has not wanted his or her child back. For that to happen, the parent first must accept that someone thinks his or her child is abused, neglected, or dependent. Drugs, alcohol, mental health issues, or simply poor parenting skills can cloud that perception. Next, the parent must accomplish every recommendation adopted by the Court and demonstrate a history of compliance with those recommendations. That can be a daunting task for parents who have very little money or family support. Thus, if we can buy a parent more time he or she just might be able to accomplish what is being asked of them. Continuances are a blessing, and when they are not at the parent’s request, that is even better.

As an Attorney Advocate for the child, however, time is of the essence. The goal of the Guardian ad Litem is to establish permanence for the child within a reasonable period of time. Ideally, a child should not be in foster care longer than 12 months. If the parents cannot provide for permanence within 12 months, then the Guardian ad Litem should consider advocating for a concurrent plan or to cease reunification so that another permanent plan can be implemented. Continuances delay unnecessarily the

establishment of permanence for the child and, therefore, should not be granted lightly.

This distinction is but one of many I expect to encounter as I embrace the role of Attorney Advocate in Carteret County. I am thrilled to be given this opportunity to be a part of the Guardian ad Litem program.

A LETTER FROM DEANA K. FLEMING ASSOCIATE COUNSEL, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Dear Advocates:

An opinion was issued by the Court of Appeals in which the termination of parental rights (TPR) order was reversed and remanded due to the fact that the Guardian ad Litem was not present at the TPR hearing. While a Guardian ad Litem report was prepared and submitted at the TPR hearing as well as most of the hearings in the underlying juvenile case, the GAL assigned to the case was not present in court. The opinion is silent regarding the presence of GAL staff as “substitute” for the GAL in court.

Based on the opinion, a GAL’s presence at court hearings cannot be downplayed. Certainly much of your work is done investigating, attending meetings, preparing the court report, etc. outside of court; however, as Guardian ad Litem you are the child’s “representative” and should be in court if at all possible. Please pay particular attention to court hearings which you are subject to appear, specifically: termination of parental rights; review or permanency planning hearings when custody is changed (i.e. custody or guardianship is ordered); and the adjudication/disposition hearing.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of the abused and neglected children in your community.

FROM JANE CLARE:

11.7% of North Carolina middle school students have smoked one or more cigarettes in the past 30 days.

33.6% of North Carolina middle school students have drunk more than a few sips of alcohol.

11.9% of North Carolina middle school students have used marijuana.

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Alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are considered to be gateway drugs; they tend to lead to the use of stronger drugs.

Those who start to drink between the ages of 12-17 are 30 times more likely to use marijuana. Those between the ages of 12 -17 who use alcohol and marijuana are 17 times more likely to try harder drugs, such as cocaine and heroin.

Tobacco includes 200 toxic chemicals (including arsenic and lead), more than 60 of which are known carcinogens.

82% of adolescent smokers in North Carolina started before the age of 15.

The above information is reported by the Poe Center for Health Education, the group that recently put on the Drugs Uncovered program in our counties.

If you have seen more tobacco stores opening it might be due to the sale of items such as spice, K-2 and salvia.

Spice and K-2 are synthetic cannabinoids. They are sold as potpourri or incense. When smoked they can produce a high like marijuana. They are currently unregulated and leave no trace in urinalysis drug tests. Becoming popular among members of the military, the Corps has banned Marines from using these items.

Salvia (salvia divinorum) is a perennial herb in the mint family that is commonly found in Mexico. It can be chewed or smoked. Users can experience hallucinations.

FROM JERI GORMAN:

Many of you have asked about our upcoming move. It appears we will be moving sometime in the spring. While we are very excited about the new space, it is going to be much smaller than we have at present. I will be working very hard in the next few months to get the closed files packed away and shipped to Raleigh. If you have any closed files that you have not turned in to the office, please try to get them in before the end of the year.



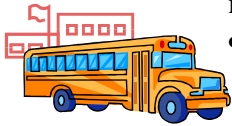
HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Tips for Guardian’s ad Litem Advocates

- Include concerns about the child’s education or development in court reports.

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- Make sure your Guardian ad Litem child is attending school on a regular basis.
- Make sure transportation and other basic needs are being addressed.
- Communicate with teachers regarding the child’s educational needs.
- Observe the child, document concerns, and discuss them with the child’s teachers, social worker, and other service providers when appropriate.
- Recommend tutoring and other academic help when needed.



- Identify the child’s strengths and recommend activities that support those strengths.

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PRINCIPLES OF PERMANENCE:

- Constantly examine your own value system.
- Carefully examine the child protection agency case record.
- Ask the parent why they think they lost custody of their child.
- Recognize that “the system” should be operating on the child’s sense of time.
- Understand grief and what moving and waiting do to children.
- Stay child-centered and family-focused.
- Recognize parents’ strengths, but do not ignore their failings.
- Be a team player.
- Aggravate the system if you have to be a catalyst for change.
- Work for justice; act with mercy



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JUVENILE COURT CALENDAR-3B



July 7, 2010 through October 1, 2010

<u>Date</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Judge</u>
NO COURT OCT 4, 2010 THROUGH OCT 22, 2010		
Wed, Oct 27	Pamlico	Judge Spencer
Fri, Oct 29	Carteret	Judge Alexander
Fri, Oct 29	Craven	Judge Spencer
Fri, Nov 5	Craven	Judge Waddell
Fri, Nov 12	Carteret	Judge Alexander
Fri, Nov 19	Craven	Judge Quinn
Wed, Nov 24	Pamlico	Judge Mack
Fri, Dec 3	Craven	Judge Waddell
Wed, Dec 8	Pamlico	Judge Alexander
Fri, Dec 10	Carteret	Judge Mills
Fri, Dec. 17	Carteret	Judge Spencer
Fri, Dec 17	Carteret	Judge Mills
NO COURT DEC 21, 2010 THROUGH DEC 31, 2010		



* BIRTHDAYS *

October 1.....	David Opgrand
October 4.....	Bruce Parrott
October 7.....	Lauren Hudgins
October 8.....	Megan Bryant
October 13.....	Jane Olson
October 16.....	Marshall Roberts
October 30.....	Dennis Snyder
November 1.....	Kay Ford
November 10.....	Pam Whitting
November 13.....	Ben Canady
November 17.....	Bob Clark
November 18.....	Becky Clark
November 30.....	Dwaine Harris
December 6.....	Charles Harris
December 10.....	Luci Avery
December 10.....	Kay Field
December 13.....	Barbara Hill
December 13.....	Hannah Tootle
December 14.....	Christina Berner
December 19.....	Raney Colvell
December 29.....	Jacqueline Buntyn
December 29.....	Ron Holcombe