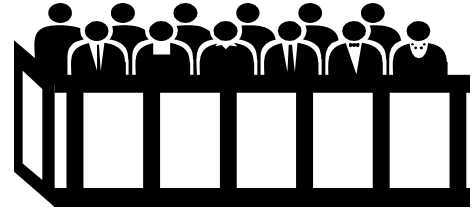


Legally Speaking

A Newsletter for Mecklenburg County Jurors



Volume 4, Issue 4

www.nccourts.org

Summer 2008

Jury Service: Justice Begins With You!

The 26th Judicial District of North Carolina has declared July 21st through July 25th as the Eighth Annual Juror Appreciation Week. This year's slogan is: "Justice Begins With You." This week is set aside each year to encourage all residents of the 26th Judicial District (Mecklenburg County) to applaud the efforts of jurors who support the justice system and fulfill this important civic responsibility on a daily basis, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of jury service.

Highlights

A special recognition ceremony will kick off the event on Monday, July 21 at 9:30am in Room 5450 of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse (832 E. 4th Street). The Honorable Robert P. Johnston and the Honorable Fritz Y. Mercer, Jr. have signed the Proclamation, which will be read aloud, declaring July 21-25, 2008 as Juror Appreciation Week in the 26th Judicial District. Members of the Mecklenburg County Jury Commission and other court officials will also be present.

This year's celebrity guest speaker will be WCNC 6 News Sports Anchor Ira Cronin, who recently served on a jury.

This year's event is sponsored primarily by Justice Initiatives, Inc. and the Mecklenburg County Bar. Other sponsors include The Hilton Center City, Carolina Panthers, Charlotte Bobcats and Charlotte Knights, who have donated event tickets and sports memorabilia.

Movies will be shown in the Jury Assembly Room throughout the day for the duration of the week and free popcorn will be provided.

Local restaurants, including Showmars, Pappa's, Quizno's, and Chambers restaurant in the Crowne Plaza Hotel will be giving jurors lunch discounts during the week.

Court personnel will be holding question and answer sessions at 9:30am and 1:30pm in the Jury Assembly Room each day to give jurors the opportunity to speak with them about their roles in the jury system.

Live entertainment this year will be provided by Magic by Enigma. Contemporary live music will be performed by local musician Jeremy Hurst. Live jazz will also be performed by local jazz ensemble Conversation Piece.

Court officials recognize the important work jurors perform in our courts each day and appreciate all the citizens who devote their valuable time to our system of justice. This week is a special time to thank those who serve as jurors in Mecklenburg County.



LOCAL ARTIST JEREMY HURST
PERFORMS LIVE DURING JUROR
APPRECIATION WEEK

JURY COORDINATORS



Mary Poston is the lead Jury Coordinator for the 26th Judicial District. She is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of UNCC with a BA in Sociology, and she also holds a post-baccalaureate diploma in Paralegal Technology from CPCC. She is a North Carolina State Bar Certified Paralegal. She was employed as a manager at Pillowtex for over twenty-five years, until the company closed in July 2003. Mary has been the Jury Coordinator since January, 2005.



Mary F. Poston

Vanessa Glass-Harris is a part-time Jury Coordinator for the 26th Judicial District. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Ball State University and a diploma in Paralegal Technology from



Vanessa Glass-Harris

Queens University. Vanessa performed jury service in 2007 and enjoyed her experience so much, she wanted to volunteer at the courthouse. After volunteering at the Information Desk on Level 2 for several months, Vanessa applied for and was chosen for the new part-time Jury Coordinator position. Vanessa worked for the California Department of Corrections (DOC), New York City DOC and taught at CPCC and CMS for a total of 18 years. She is a member of the Board of Directors for Time Out Youth.

Juror Education Project

Want to Check Out an iPod?

- ◆ iPods are available between the hours of 10:00 AM and 12:15 PM and 2:00 PM-4:30 PM
- ◆ See the Jury Coordinators
- ◆ Complete the form
- ◆ Submit your driver's license for collateral
- ◆ iPods must be returned to the Jury Coordinators before going into a courtroom or to lunch

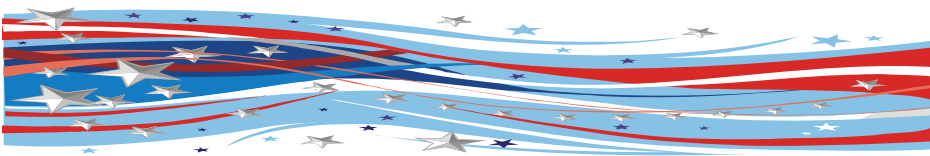




Free parking for jurors is available at the 4th Street Parking Deck, which is located at the intersection of 4th and McDowell Streets. The public entrance to the parking deck is on 4th Street, directly across from the 3rd and 4th Street/I-277/John Belk Freeway exit ramp. As you enter the deck, punch for a ticket and park on Level 4. *Accessible parking for persons with disabilities is available on Level 2.* You will validate your ticket in the Jury Assembly Room. You must give the validated ticket to the attendant as you exit the parking deck. If you have an oversized vehicle (up to 9 feet in height) you must park on the 2nd Level. Please see the attendant for motorcycle parking instructions. Never park on the street. You will not have time to feed the meter throughout the day. If you choose to park at any location other than the 4th Street Parking Deck, including the Government Center parking deck, or if your vehicle is ticketed and/or towed, you will be directly responsible for the cost.

ONCE YOU HAVE PARKED: Using the crosswalk, cross McDowell Street. Enter the Mecklenburg County Courthouse through the entrance on McDowell Street. All visitors must go through a security checkpoint. You must remove all metals from your person, including belts, keys, cell phones, change, etc. You may be asked to remove your shoes.

LEAVING THE DECK: Please exit in the lane marked JURORS, which is the lane closest to the booth. You will need to give your validated ticket to the attendant at the booth. The far right lane is for monthly parkers only. Jurors are unable to exit using the far right lane.



ADA REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATION

If you are hearing impaired and wish to request an auxiliary aid or service (i.e. assistive listening equipment, sign language interpreter, or captioning) for communication access, or if you are in need of any other type of accommodation, please contact the **ADA Coordinator at 704-686-0268 (Relay North Carolina 7-1-1)** prior to your date of service.



CIVICS Program

Interested in volunteering with the court system? Our CIVICS Program (Citizens Involved in Volunteering In the Court System) has been created to allow anyone with a desire to help their community in a unique way the opportunity to volunteer. The hours are flexible within the Monday through Friday, 8-5 timeframe. There are no educational requirements; however, basic office skills and the ability to speak Spanish are a plus. You must be at least 18 years of age, have a clean criminal history, and have no cases pending before the court.

Speak Now!

Need a speaker for your civic, church, school, or neighborhood organization? Speak Now!, the 26th Judicial District Speaker's Bureau, can provide you with a court official to speak on a wide range of legal topics at no cost. A tour of the courthouse and/or jail can also be arranged.

For more information on either of these programs, please contact: Charles Keller, Community Access and Outreach Administrator at 704-686-0269, or email: charles.w.keller@nccourts.org.

You can also visit our website at www.nccourts.org to download brochures, catalogs, and forms regarding these programs.



Things You Should Know!

Reporting

Please report to the Jury Assembly Room at 8:00 AM. Please be on time. Court operates on a tight schedule and your promptness affects this schedule. Allow extra drive time, time to park, as well as for the 10-minute walk to the courthouse from the 4th Street Parking Deck. If you have never driven downtown before, you may find it beneficial to make a dry run on a weekend to see where you will be parking and reporting. There are also several CATS routes that pick up and unload near the courthouse.

Security

Every effort is made to ensure the courthouse is a safe environment. The Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office is in charge of courthouse security. It may take you some time to get into the building through security. All visitors to the courthouse must walk through a metal detector. Removing all metal objects from your person, including belts and steel-toed shoes, will speed up this process. You must place all items you are carrying in a basket to be scanned. The metal detectors will not pose a health risk to you; this includes pregnant or nursing mothers. If you have a special need or disability, please inform the deputies. Laptop computers are allowed in the courthouse. You will be asked to turn these on for the deputies before being allowed to enter the building. Knives, scissors, knitting needles, or any other sharp objects are not allowed into the building. Cameras are not allowed into the building. Cell phones are allowed.

Arriving

You must check in with the Jury Coordinator at the desk in order to receive credit for your service. It is a common misconception that we have your social security number. WE DO NOT HAVE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS. The Federal government, however, does require this number in order for you to be paid for your service. You will be asked to write your social security number on the slip at the bottom of your summons, and place it in a secure box. If you do not have your summons, please see the Jury Coordinator, who will give you a social security slip to complete and place in the secure box.

Orientation

Once everyone has arrived, the Jury Coordinator will begin a live orientation, which will answer most, if not all, questions you may have. Please be patient and pay attention during this orientation. Cell phones, pagers, computers, and MP3 players, and any other electronic devices must be turned off during this orientation, or they will be confiscated.

Courthouse Etiquette

Please note that cellular phone use, cameras, and tape recorders are not permitted in the courtroom. All cell phones and beepers must be set in silent mode. Cellular phones may be used in the Jury Assembly Room in designated areas but must be turned off during juror orientation and/or when entering a courtroom.

Dress Code

Casual business attire is suggested. Shorts, tank tops, bare midriffs, shirts with controversial depictions or wording, or similar dress are not allowed in the courtrooms. The temperature in court can be unpredictable, so please dress accordingly. Shoes must be worn at all times; beach sandals or flip-flops are prohibited.

SUGGESTIONS FOR JURORS

When you receive your jury summons:

Tell your employer.

Dress respectfully when you go to the courthouse.

Be prepared to fill some down time. Bring something to read.

Answer all questions you are asked honestly and completely.

If there is something you do not understand, ask the judge or other court personnel.

When you sit on a trial:

Use only the evidence you are given.

Do not conduct your own research.

Write a note to the judge if you have a question about the trial.

Follow the judge's instructions. Do not interpret the judge's conduct as a cue about the case.

Respect each other and each other's opinions.

Source: American Bar Association



These restaurants are within a short walk of the courthouse. All accept debit cards. There is an ATM located on Level 2 next to the Clerk's Office. A free trolley service also operates within the downtown area, and can take you to other restaurants uptown.

The Courtside Café

<http://www.courtsidecafenc.com/>

Inside the Courthouse on Level 1

Serving breakfast and lunch daily.

Showmar's

Government Center

Serving lunch daily: soups, sandwiches, salads, daily lunch specials. *20% discount with juror badge or jury summons.*

Pappas Grill

Serving lunch daily: sandwiches, hot dogs, hamburgers, baked potatoes.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel

Serving a daily lunch buffet. 15% discount for jurors.

Quizno's 4th Street Parking Deck

Serving lunch daily: sandwiches, salads, and soups.

KokoMo's Coffeeshop- 4th Street Parking Deck

Serving coffees and pastries daily.

Juror Appreciation Week— July 21-25, 2008

*Door Prizes * Movies * Food * Beverages * Guest Speakers * Music * Entertainment *

Sponsored by the Mecklenburg County Bar and Justice Initiatives, Inc.



The Mecklenburg County Jury Commission

Each county in North Carolina has a Jury Commission comprised of three members. Each member must be a resident and registered voter in the county in which they serve. Their duties are to ensure that sources are utilized to develop a master jury list that is representative of the community at large, as well as to ensure that the way in which potential jurors are summoned is done in a fair and random manner.

Gail Logan Gibson, Sandra S. Rork and Carlos E. Sanchez were selected and appointed Jury Commissioners to serve the 2005-2007 term.

Gibson, a native of Shelby, NC, graduated from Appalachian State Teacher's College and obtained a business degree from Appalachian University in Boone, NC. From 1974-1988 she was employed with the North Carolina Court System as the only secretary to Mecklenburg County District Court Judges. In 1988 she became the Jury Supervisor for Mecklenburg County, where she remained until her retirement in 1993. Mrs. Gibson has served as a Jury Commissioner since 1995.

Rork, a Mecklenburg County Jury Commissioner since 1999, graduated from the University of Michigan with a bachelor's degree in nursing and Emory University where she obtained a master's degree in nursing. She has served as a nurse, counselor and Director of Special Services for Florence-Darlington Technical College, and owner of the Speakers Network, a company which established and managed a speakers bureau that provided professional and celebrity speakers for corporate and association meetings around the country.

Sanchez, the first Hispanic to be appointed to the Commission, is a native of Bogota, Colombia and has a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Political Science from Florida International University. Mr. Sanchez is employed as Director of External Affairs for South Carolina in the Mid-Market Division of AT&T Telecommunications. He currently serves as Vice Chair of the Charlotte Latin American Chamber of Commerce and is active with the Leadership Team Board at Collinswood Bilingual Language Academy.



Gail Logan Gibson



Carlos Sanchez



Sandra S. Rork

Juror Must Write 12 Apology Letters

KSAT News from San Antonio, Texas reported on July 7, 2008 that Judge Juanita Vasquez-Gardner sentenced former juror Elizabeth Chavarria to community service. Mrs. Chavarria failed to appear as a juror for the trial of Ali Al Mearek, who was charged with murder and eventually convicted. Pursuant to Mrs. Chavarria's sentence she must write apology letters to the 12 jurors who sat on the case, to the prosecutor and to the defense counsel. She is also required to assist court employees in the juror assembly area of the Cadena-Reeves Justice Center. Judge Vasquez-Gardner did not require Mrs. Chavarria to apologize to the defendant in the case.

Steps in a Jury Trial

1. Jury Selection
2. Opening Statements (Both Sides)
3. Presentation of Evidence (Both Sides)
4. Jury Instructions from the Judge
5. Closing Arguments (Both Sides)
6. Jury Deliberation
7. Reading of the Verdict
8. Sentencing (in a criminal case)

My Jury Service Experience...

“It was very interesting and overall an enjoyable experience. It is nice that we, as the public, can take part in helping the judicial system.”

“Thank you for making this a comfortable way to be a better citizen!”

“My experience exceeded my expectations. The staff was very friendly and the facility very nice. My experience was awesome!”

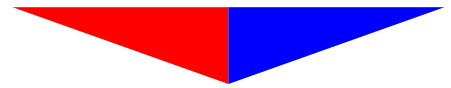
“I appreciate the consideration given to the potential jurors. The atmosphere was nice and the personnel very helpful. Although it takes time away from our normal routine, I truly felt like it was a service to my community rather than an obligation or a duty. Thank you!”

“Overall not as bad as I was expecting. Not bad at all! Looking forward to an even better experience in two years. Keep it up!”



We're on the Web!

www.nccourts.org



**Look at our website
for jury information
and other educational
materials**

Go Wireless!

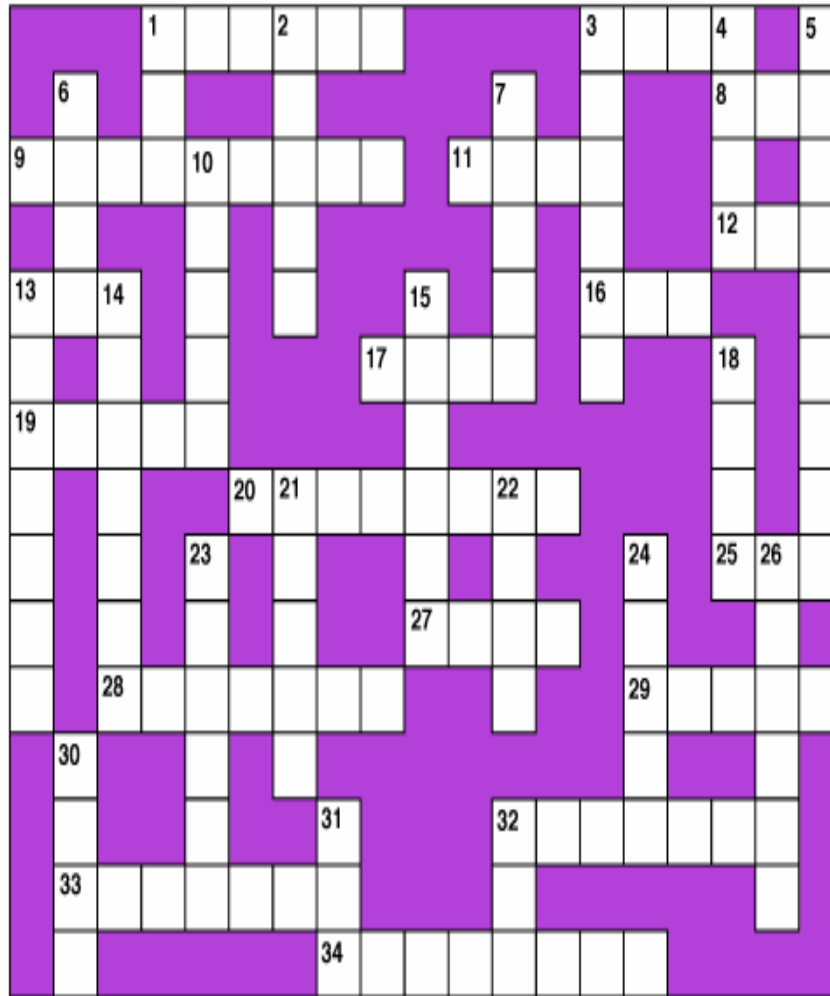
**Wireless Internet Access
is Available in the
Jury Assembly Room**



We would like to hear from you! We welcome any comments about the newsletter, as well as story ideas for future issues. Please send your juror anecdotes, suggestions, and/or story ideas to:

Charles Keller
Community Access and Outreach Administrator
26th Judicial District of North Carolina
832 East Fourth Street
Suite 4420
Charlotte, NC 28202
Charles.W.Keller@nccourts.org

SUMMER CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Light rain | 28. Step back | 10. Capture |
| 3. String _____ | 29. Very humid weather | 13. Leisure activities |
| 8. Single | 32. Warm weather foot wear | 14. Follows a car |
| 9. Jumping & hopping game | 33. _____ storm | 15. June 21 |
| 11. Summer month | 34. Thrilling | 18. Always do your _____ |
| 12. Have lunch | DOWN | 21. Pools are full of this |
| 13. Very warm | 1. Short form of sister | 22. Birds home |
| 16. City home for wild animals | 2. Time piece | 23. Suntan _____ |
| 17. Summer month | 3. Cool wind | 24. Hot & _____ |
| 19. Sandy spot | 4. Musical symbol | 26. Summer month |
| 20. Water sport | 5. Summer month | 30. Better _____ than never |
| 25. Used to pave roads | 6. Go it alone | 31. _____ you sleeping? |
| 27. Relax | 7. Weather word | 32. Take a seat |