

# BarNotes

## SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BAR ASSOCIATION

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Bar Notes is published 11 times a year. Articles, announcements, and advertisements are due by the first day of the month prior to the publication date. The articles in Bar Notes are written for general interest and are not meant to be relied upon as a substitute for independent research and independent verification of accuracy.

Layout & Design  
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Master Graphics Printing  
(818) 343-0500

# Forward Focus

## Important Issues Face the Bar Association and Valley Legal Community

SUE M. BENDAUID-ARBIV, SFVBA PRESIDENT



At age 17, I lived on a kibbutz in Israel. For months, I drove a tractor from sunrise to sunset -- pulling irrigation lines from one side of a cornfield to the other. Back and forth. Day in, day out. Without the benefit of modern technological distractions (like the iPod), I bounced up and down on the tractor seat in silence (except for the tractor's constant grinding) and daydreamed about life and where it would lead. I look back fondly at that idyllic time and remember the responsibility I had and discipline I needed.

Looking forward, I similarly respect the responsibilities I bear as incoming president; having been honored to lead a respected organization with an 80-year history and 2,100 members who include accomplished lawyers and business leaders of our community. It is quite a contrast because as we still bounce up and down in our daily lives, we must move our organization not back and forth, but in only one direction – forward. Nor will we proceed in silence. Our community and our society are surrounded and filled with the hubbub of politics and courts and justice. We must help plow and lay the lines for the future.

In his first Inaugural Address, President Bill Clinton said: “[L]et us begin with energy and hope, with faith and discipline, and let us work until our work is done.” As we start this new year for the

San Fernando Valley Bar Association, we should, together, optimistically work with energy, hope, faith and discipline to accomplish our current goals and those we create in the coming year.

Fortunately, we have a good start. With the capable assistance of Executive Director Liz Post, Associate Director Michele Morley, all of the staff, and the leadership and commitment of our all-volunteer Board of Trustees, our bar association is stronger than ever.

With the recent move to our new location, the staff and Board of Trustees are energized to hit the ground running on our initiatives. For those of you who haven't yet visited our new offices, I encourage you to stop by our Open House on October 15 and say hello. We're at 21250 Califa Street, Suite 113 in Woodland Hills.

Much of our focus this year will be on increasing activities that will be both fun and beneficial to members and our law practices. This will include networking, impressive MCLE events with experienced speakers (including our own members and judicial officers) and social get-togethers. We also intend to work closely with our local judicial officers and community business leaders to increase community outreach.

In 1964, at the height of the civil rights movement, our bar association

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adopted a resolution, stating: “We urge all members of the Bar, within their own communities, to actively support the full realization and exercise of civil rights by all citizens without regard for race, creed or national origin.” Though our community has made great strides in improving equal rights, the courts have recognized a large disparity between the make-up of our citizenry and the select few on the bench. As a result, our courts are focusing more on the need for diversity. We will work with our Foundation, business leaders and judicial officers to improve in this area.

We are also excited about addressing needs of our members by offering more member benefits including lower-cost insurance programs and a free on-line legal library service. We also intend to support our judicial officers as they face ever-increasing challenges. There’s a good chance you’ll see and hear our bar association express positions in support of our bench officers and courts on issues relating to the operation of our justice system.

Recently, North Valley District Supervising Judge Alice C. Hill alerted our trustees to the challenge of security in the courts. Shortly, I will ask our board to go on record supporting measures to enhance security in these locations. I urge you to share your views on this and other public issues within the scope of our bar association, so we can better represent you.

Many of you already benefited by our new Fee Arbitration Program, which provides an efficient procedure to resolve fee disputes between lawyers and clients. Our bar association and the volunteer arbitrators have received positive feedback and the program is growing. I encourage you to give this program a try if you are ever involved in a fee dispute.

Many of you have served our community, and also benefited from, participating in our newly-renamed Attorney Referral Service (formerly LRIS – Lawyer Referral & Information Service). For those new to the association, ARS is a bar association public service program that has served our community since 1948 and was one of the earliest State Bar-approved attorney referral services (our State Bar certification number is “6”). We match experienced lawyers with clients who need their services. Led by the skilled Michele Morley, ARS has been making record referrals to our members - month after month – and soon, the public will be introduced to ARS’ new website.

We have an exciting year ahead. Our officers, members of the Board of Trustees, section chairs, committee members and staff are hard at work. We look forward to serving you this year and intend to increase your pride in being a member and supporting the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. ✨