



# GBA TODAY

Glendale Bar Association

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## President's Message

*"When I go to the shore, I take along the poems of Pablo Neruda. I suppose it's because the poems are simultaneously lush and ripe and kind of lazy, yet throbbing with life - like summer itself"*-  
Tom Robbins

Summer for GBA means a combination of soccer (Copa Mundial for all you soccer fans), mixers, amazingly high energy continuing legal education, and hot topic discussions at networking luncheons. Our group is working diligently to also offer our members more philanthropic opportunities around our community.

Our annual summer BBQ is a great start to making new contacts, renewing old ones, and just relaxing while appreciating the different color hues of the setting sun. On Wednesday, July 2, 2014, we are returning to the beautiful home of our beloved Board Member/Director, Daniel Kimbell, and his lovely wife, Yuka, in the gorgeous mountains of Glendale. A beautiful view, great food (catered Mexican-cooked on site) and plenty of cold beverages! Does it really get any better than this? The chance to meet and to catch up with friends awaits us all!

The June/July GBA calendar also includes the opportunity to gain valuable insight from our upcoming CLE speakers, participate in trivia and karaoke events, join a troika after a networking lunch, or stop by at one of our many mixers. Please see the newsletter and our website for the details on these programs.

On Friday May 15th, I was fortunate to participate in the annual Glendale Police Foundation Luncheon at the Glendale Hilton. The Foundation honored those police officers and staff that went above and beyond the call of duty this last year. ABC Eyewitness News' David Ono told stories of valiant efforts and selflessness among the people who dedicate their lives to serve and protect the citizens of Glendale. The GBA would like to thank Honorable Fred Rotenberg and Honorable John Doyle for joining the Glendale Bar Association in support of the Glendale Police Foundation and this year's honorees.

It may have been May and early June but it definitely felt like the start of summer. Here's to a successful summer for the GBA and many more to come!

Best wishes,  
**Monica R. Molina**

## CALENDAR – UPCOMING EVENTS- Save the Dates!

- June Networking Lunch  
Wednesday, June 25, 2014-  
Brand 158 (Patio), Noon
- July 2, 2014, Annual GBA  
Summer Barbeque @ Casa  
Kimbell-6:00-9:00 pm
- July 8, 2014, Family  
Violence Appellate Project-  
"Battle of the Bands"-The  
Belasco Theater-6:00 pm
- July 10, 2014, Susan  
Schwartz, Deputy District  
Attorney, City of Glendale-  
ETHICS MCLE –Notte Luna  
(Dinner)-"Public Corruption  
in the City of Glendale:  
Prosecution of Mayor John  
Drayman"-5:30 pm
- July Networking Lunch  
Wednesday, July 23, 2014-  
Venue TBA-Noon
- July 24, 2014-Trivia Night  
Part Deux at "The Famous"-  
GBA v. PBA-7:30-9:30 pm
- August 6, 2014-Paul Kiesel-  
MCLE-(Lunch)-Venue TBA
- August 14, 2014-Karaoke  
Night at Dimples in Burbank  
6:30-8:00 pm
- September 4, 2014,  
Honorable Scott M. Gordon,  
Presiding Family Law Judge  
of the Los Angeles Superior  
Court-MCLE-(Dinner)-  
Venue TBA

## SFVBA Members Establish Valley Bar Mediation Center



**THE BUDGET CUTS IMPOSED ON THE STATE'S** court system have profoundly impacted public access to courts and speedy dispute resolution. In February, *Valley Lawyer* explored the immediate effects of the economic crisis on the court system with a review of the Los Angeles Superior Court's restructuring plan. Since then, another significant change to the courts has been implemented: dismantling of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program. In March of this year, the Superior Court announced its ADR Program would be shuttered by June 28. The end of the program was a direct effect of the budget cuts. For more than twenty years, the program, which was the largest of its kind in the country, helped settle thousands of cases before trial. In the fiscal year 2011-2012 alone, the program successfully closed 12,906 cases. The loss of a program of this size and efficiency leaves a significant void. The number of cases waiting to be litigated continues to rise and local courtroom dockets are increasingly overburdened. Modest means litigants, who previously benefitted from free or low-cost mediation services, now face longer and more expensive litigation or higher-cost private mediation services. Disputes that could quickly be resolved through mediation are now worsening the court's backlog, which is also contending with closures of ten courthouses. Recognizing the grave need left by the ADR Program's absence, SFVBA members have taken the initiative to establish what they hope will be a suitable replacement. Associate Member and mediator Milan Slama and Attorney Member and mediator Myer Sankary teamed up to design and implement a viable option for litigants who seek speedy, efficient and economical resolution to their disputes. "When I learned of the Program's closure, I knew it would have a detrimental effect on the community," says Slama. "I approached [then SFVBA President] David Gurnick with the idea of establishing a Bar-sponsored program to help offset the effects of the Program's loss." With the Bar President's encouragement, Slama approached Myer Sankary, Chair of the SFVBA Mandatory Fee Arbitration Program. Sankary agreed that action by the Bar was necessary and agreed to help lead the effort. As Sankary explains, "Mediation plays a

critical role in our legal system, primarily to relieve the burden on the court system but also to provide a cost-effective and time-saving means of resolving disputes. Closure of the ADR Program is a disaster for litigants and denies access to justice." Together they are working to bring their vision of an SFVBA-sponsored, independent, non-profit mediation program to reality in the form of the Valley Bar Mediation Center.

### Legal Community Support

In May, the two designed a survey to gauge support for the program among Valley attorneys. Survey responders were overwhelmingly positive, with ninety-five percent expressing support for the project. Individual comments referred to the proposed program as "essential," "vital," and "invaluable." Several responders who served on the court's ADR panel volunteered to serve on the Bar's panel. The overarching message from survey responders was that mediation is a crucial option for many litigants and the Bar is in a good position to pick up where the court's program left off. More than three-fourths of responders indicated they would be inclined to use such a program, with most indicating they prefer a staff-administered program to be paid for by the parties. The majority of responders also indicated they used the court's ADR program in the past. "The overwhelming positive response from the survey gave us the impetus to seek approval from the SFVBA Board of Trustees to proceed with the formation of an independent non-profit organization that would be sponsored by the Bar," explains Sankary.

### Leading the Project

Slama and Sankary are both knowledgeable, committed leaders with many years of experience as mediators. They are properly equipped with the communication and consensus building skills needed to lead the ambitious project. Milan Slama's interest in mediation stems from his experience growing up amidst national turmoil in former Czechoslovakia. "I witnessed a lot of tension in the country, a lot of conflict which was never resolved in the way I hoped it would be," he explains. "This experience was simmering at the bottom of my soul. At the time I was unaware that a venue like mediation existed." Slama studied mathematics and eventually moved to the United States to escape the political unrest in his home country. "Coming from that particular regime, the issues of justice and fairness were very important to me," he says. While working in the corporate world as a systems analyst, Slama discovered he had a talent for conflict resolution. He observed that disputes between coworkers were more easily resolved with the assistance of a neutral third-party. Slama decided to nurture this talent and attained a degree in philosophy with an emphasis in

communication theory and human condition issues from California State University Los Angeles. "Philosophy taught me not only the rigor of thinking but also receptiveness to diverse perspectives and how to reconcile them by searching for common solutions," explains Slama. "This training was very useful in mediations." He gained mediation experience through several programs and agencies, including the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Pepperdine University. Having mediated over 600 cases, Slama's extensive work has led to several accolades, including recognition from the California State Senate and the Los Angeles Superior Court, which named him "Top Mediator" in 2010 and "Outstanding Volunteer" in 2011. Myer Sankary's interest in mediation stemmed from his exposure to leading scholars in the field during his time at Harvard Law School. He was an early follower of Roger Fisher, one of the first proponents of negotiation theory and practice. He continued to follow the early development of mediation in the 1990s and trained at Pepperdine University. In 1996, he arranged for and accompanied two Pepperdine professors to present a mediation program to Palestinians and Israelis at the Peace Community of Neve Shalom in Israel, where they witnessed an outbreak of violence in Jerusalem. "That experience solidified my commitment to mediation as a way to solve difficult conflicts," says Sankary. His first job as an attorney was with the Wyman, Bautzer law firm in Beverly Hills, where he learned a variety of areas of law, including probate, estate planning, securities, corporate acquisitions, personal injury, and family law. In 1971 he set up his own practice, focusing his work on estate planning, probate, real estate, and business transactions and litigation. "In my law practice, I always tried to find creative solutions to resolving conflict in an effort to avoid litigation," says Sankary. For over 15 years, Sankary mediated hundreds of cases pro bono for the county courts. In 2008, he became a full-time mediator with ADR Services, Inc. To date, he has mediated over 1,000 cases and consistently brings over 90% of his cases to settlement. Sankary is widely recognized as an excellent mediator and leader in the field. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the ABA's Solo and General Practice Committee as well as an Outstanding Achievement Award from the State Bar of California's Solo and Small Firm Section. Since 2007, the Section has also named an annual award after Sankary. The Myer J. Sankary Lawyer of the Year Award is given to "an individual who has exercised notable leadership or shown a contribution to the development of greater justice in a field of law."

### Developing Ideas and Plan of Action

Slama and Sankary have assembled a working team of Bar leaders and non-profit experts, including SFVBA President Adam Grant, Past President David Gurnick, CSUN Instructor Dr. Jack Goetz, and non-profit administrator Deanna Armbruster. The team has developed clear vision: to operate the Valley Bar

Mediation Center as an independent non-profit mediation program with flexibility to establish its own policies and governing rules, and to elevate mediation to a higher level of professional service than what currently exists. Dr. Goetz is the Academic Lead for CSUN's Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution and has been an outspoken advocate for changing the field of mediation into a formalized profession. For his individual contributions to the legal community, the Los Angeles Superior Court ADR department named him "Volunteer of the Year" last year. His expertise in a professionalized approach to mediator training will inform the Valley Bar Mediation Center's professional standards and required qualifications for mediators.

With rigorous standards, the Valley Bar Mediation Center seeks to become a trusted source for parties in need of a mediator. Parties will no longer have to rely on higher-priced referrals or search large online listings. The Center intends to provide the public with a reliable panel of qualified and experienced mediator professionals, complete with a quality control system. Mediators will meet continuing legal education requirements and maintain high ethical standards, while parties will be able to offer honest feedback through customer satisfaction surveys. Another goal for the Center is to provide qualified mediators at below-market rates for Valley residents who are traditionally underserved by the legal market, particularly limited jurisdiction cases and parties in pro per. Unlike the court ADR Program, the Center will have no pro bono requirement. "We want the best mediators possible to serve, be respected and paid for their excellent work," says Sankary. The reasoning is that required fees, even nominal ones, will ensure the parties are engaged and invested in the success of the resolution process. Sankary wants to make clear that the Center is not intended to encroach on services of private mediation panels. "The Center's services will aim at the sector of the community that cannot afford the higher-priced programs," he explains. "We also envision that the standards and procedures we use will become the standard for professional certification throughout the industry." The overall goals for the Center may be well-established but there are still a few crucial steps left for the Center to become operational. The Center's Articles of Incorporation have been filed with and accepted by the California Secretary of State. The team has adopted by-laws, appointed its initial board of directors and officers, and is filing its application for federal tax exemption as a non-profit organization. The Center's success also depends on the team's ability to secure funding. "We are at a crucial juncture," says Slama. The team is communicating with potential donors, foundations and other bar associations to acquire the initial round of funding. That seed money will help establish the Center's website, data management systems, marketing plans and program administrators. Slama is optimistic, "Once people learn about what we aim to accomplish and the serious need that exists in the community for affordable, quality mediation services, they will be very interested and eager to support our program."

## State Bar Updates

### State Bar

**Leadership Summit Invitation:** The State Bar of California's Council on Access & Fairness would like to invite you to their upcoming Leadership Summit on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The event is for aspiring or established leaders within the legal profession. For more details please review the information in the attachment. If you wish to speak with someone directly, please contact Brandi Holmes, Senior Administrative Assistant, Access & Fairness Programs at 415-538-2587.

**Discipline Standards:** A meeting of the Discipline Standards Task Force is scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup>. The agenda may be found at the following link:  
<http://board.calbar.ca.gov/Agenda.aspx?id=10826&t=0&s=false>

**Civil Justice Strategies Task Force:** The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup> in the Los Angeles office. The agenda may be found at the following link:  
<http://board.calbar.ca.gov/Agenda.aspx?id=10814&t=0&s=false>

**Annual Meeting:** Information for the September Annual Meeting of the State Bar is now available on the website. Early bird registration for the Meeting and hotel is August 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Bar Leaders Conference:** Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Bar Leaders Conference on Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup> in San Diego.

### **Lawyer Referral Program**

The Glendale Bar Association (GBA) lawyer referral services is a lawyer nonprofit referral service certified by the State Bar of California serving Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena and neighboring communities in Los Angeles. To become a member of the GBA LRS, please contact any of the current board members



### Networking Lunches

*Be ready to eat and network!*

*We look forward to seeing more of you!*

*The GBA had its fourth monthly networking lunch on May 28<sup>th</sup>, at Damon's, where members discussed many recent topics including the recent court decision holding that the rules governing tenure and other teachers' protections violated the state constitution. What's the best way to meet a group of attorneys to whom you can refer clients with confidence? Come to the monthly networking lunches! Meet your fellow GBA attorneys, learn about their practice areas, and get to know*

*them. As an added bonus, if you want, the GBA will assign you to a small, 3-4 person group or "Troika," which will allow you to form an even better relationship with your fellow members. (Troikas change every month)*

*Join us for the fifth lunch of the year on Wednesday, June 25, 2014, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Brand 158 (Patio). Restaurant is located at 158 North Brand Blvd., Glendale, CA 91203. Don't forget to bring your business cards!*



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## CLE Events



**Pasadena Bar Association  
President, Oliver Barachyan,  
Dodgers General Counsel, Sam  
Fernandez, and Monica R.  
Molina.**

Special thanks to Sam  
Fernandez for an informative  
presentation on the business of  
baseball and his 31 year career  
with the Los Angeles Dodgers

Please submit information you wish to share with colleagues and with the public— information such as members' individual charitable efforts, news about your own cases, and updates and/or viewpoints regarding significant current legal issues. The Board will consider all submissions for inclusion in GBA publications.

**Last Call for  
Nominations:** The San  
Fernando Valley Business  
Journal invites the Glendale

Bar Association members to submit nominations for the **2014 *Trusted Advisors Awards***, where outstanding attorneys in the San Fernando Valley region will be awarded and recognized as a SFV trusted advisors.

**Nominations are due by July 3, less than 2 weeks away!**

Here is a link to access the form:

<http://www.sfvbj.com/bizevents/>

## **National Law Day**

Special thanks to **Alan Chappell** for wonderfully organizing National Law Day at Glendale High School on May 21, 2014. The local high school students were very responsive and inquisitive about the ins and outs of law. We recognize those who participated.

Panelists:

**Judge John Doyle,  
Sheldon Eskin, Scott Solis,  
Sarkis Babachanian,  
Armen Kiramijyan, Ty Tartt,  
Patrick Liddell, Jeff Kopczynski,  
Edgar J. Gutierrez,  
Manny Medrano,  
Mike Zuckerman, Eric Ashton, Jr.,  
Arpa Stepanian, Richard Blasco,  
Peter Wright, and Monica  
Molina.**

## Past Events



**Myer Sankary and  
Robert Brugge, Gordon Biersch  
GBA joint mixer with the San  
Fernando Valley Bar  
Association**



*Future Glendale Bar  
Association Member,  
Mark Oknyansky, and Future  
US National Soccer Team  
Member, Kaitlyn Corral*



*Go USA!!!*