

I hope that everyone enjoyed the Holidays and I wish you a healthy, prosperous and enjoyable new year. The coming year promises to be a very interesting and challenging one. Our Association finished the year on a high note. On December 13th over 20 of our members took turns out in front of the courthouse collecting money and toys for children in need of assistance. The details are in a side bar on page _____. I would like to extend a special thanks to Jean Neubaur?, Sylvia -----, and Claude Convisser for organizing this effort and to Don Meela who filled the air with holiday music on his accordion for over an hour. We raised over \$1,250 dollars in cash and hundreds of dollars worth of toys.

On December 13th we enjoyed a very entertaining, spirited, and enlightening Bench/Bar meeting. Our Chief Judge Haddock was so prescient that he had written answers in hand. It is no wonder that he is so protective of the Court's law clerks. While Judges Haddock, Kloch, Moore, Rideout, Dawkins and O'Flaherty shared their observations and concerns, Judge Swersky was in Richmond successfully doing the same before the General Assembly and has been reappointed for another term. Congratulations Judge Swersky. We are lucky to have such a dedicated and responsive bench.

Our next membership dinner meeting is on January 17th and it will be well worth attending. Congressman Bobby Scott will be our guest speaker. I have also invited members of the specialty bars that are represented in the NOVALAW group to be our guests that night. I urge you to attend. Representative Scott is an inspiring and captivating speaker.

This Year Will Be Different

As everyone knows, the government has decided to try most, if not all, of the terrorist related cases here in Alexandria in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. It is not hard to imagine the media circus that will descend upon us. The cases, the lawyers, and the court will be scrutinized. The increased attention will affect us in many ways. Parking near the Federal Court, which is now scarce, will become almost impossible. Security measures, which are already excessive (e.g., no palm pilots or cell phones allowed), will likely become even more extreme. Perhaps, we will have to leave for court 2 hours in advance - just like at the airport. The logistics and inconveniences aside, we are fortunate to have as good a trial bench as any district in the country. We can all take comfort in knowing that our federal bench will surely rise above the publicity and not allow the nature of these cases affect its decisions. Whatever has motivated the government to chose this district as the venue for the prosecution of alleged terrorists, there is no reason to believe that the defendants will not receive due process.

It is unfortunate that Judge Albert V. Bryan, Jr. has retired and will not be available to preside over some of the thornier cases. Judge Bryan was the most no-nonsense, keep-it-moving, try-your-own-case, cut-to-the-chase, "Choose your best five witnesses, Mr. Williams" judge that I have ever had the privilege to appear before. While the trials were streamlined, I am not aware of anyone who left his court and did not feel that they had not been given a fair trial. I have been told that Judge Bryan recently returned home from the hospital after a long struggle overcoming some type of bacterial infection. I know that I speak for everyone in wishing him a speedy and complete recovery.